CORP'RAL KELLY OF THE FIGHTIN' FIFTH

WILLIAM R. JAMES

CHAP. XIX—"In here," he yelled and bolted through the battered door of the building.

CORP'RAL KELLY
OF THE
FIGHTIN' FIFTH

BY

WILLIAM R. JAMES

ILLUSTRATED
BY
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Corp'ral Kelly of the Fightin' Fifth.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALL OF WAR.

A heavy, gray, spring mist that had rolled in from the lower harbor swirled silently about the frowning stone tower of Emerson High School, and through it the lights that shone from the windows of the tower room were nothing more than soft, yellow blurs, scarcely discernible from the street. Everything without the otherwise darkened granite school building was somber and silent too; just as if the old edifice had settled back into the night for a spell of sober consideration of things in general.

Up there, far above the street, the same atmosphere prevailed, despite the fact that the apartment was brilliantly lighted and the general scheme of decoration suggested everything that was care-free and pleasant. Indeed, the class pictures and photographs of football, baseball, hockey, track and basketball teams that covered

the walls, along with the trophy cases, bright Indian blankets, Lacrosse sticks, a pair of snow shoes, several gilded footballs and baseballs, and a host of similar objects, seemed much at variance with the general attitude of a number of very serious young fellows who were scattered about the room attentively considering the remarks of a man in khaki and leather puttees who stood in the middle of the floor, addressing them.

"I'll be very frank with you," said the speaker, who was known to the boys as Professor Brockford, despite the fact that he was no longer a teacher, but a practicing physician. "I am disappointed; disappointed in you fellows and disappointed in myself. We've all had our eyes closed—been too attentive to our own business and our own pleasures to realize our real duty. But, it is not too late for us to mend our ways now, 'though I do think we have all cheated ourselves of really worth-while pleasure and training combined.

"It's my candid opinion that every chap, when he turns eighteen and gets out of high school, should seriously consider enlisting in the National Guard of his State. Indeed, he should do more than consider it. He should enlist. It is a duty.

"But aside from the fact that it is a duty, the National Guard presents the only really good way for fellows of your stamp to keep in condition—

I mean, bodily fit. You have all been athletes in high school, track or field, or on some one of the teams. Yet the moment you get out of school, if you go to business, as a majority of you have done, you drop all of your athletics, become stagnant, to a certain extent, and before you know it, the fine bodies you have worked so hard to build up, are flabby and out of order generally. Then you begin to get your first spells of sickness, and you start to realize what athletics and active exercise really mean to the human system. I think—ah-er-shucks, I'm talking like a physician, I guess; please excuse it. But the facts of the case are that you have always got to keep in shape, and the best way to do that is to join the National Guard.

"Why just look what we've all missed (I'm including myself now, because I'm conscious of what a chump I've been). Here is the State of New York, furnishing a dozen or more million dollar armories in New York and Brooklyn alone. Every armory has the bulliest kind of a gym, running track, bowling alleys, swimming tank and everything else that goes to make life worth while. They have spring and fall games, basketball tournaments, indoor tennis, and mighty near everything else that a chap gets in high school and college. And besides there is a corking military education waiting for every one, and camp

experience and maneuvers and a lot of other things that are worth while, and every one of us has turned down such opportunities because we were too lazy or too busy or-or-or-well, we haven't a really good excuse.

"And now war has been declared. Uncle Sam needs trained men and he needs them quickly. And where are we? None of us fits in anywhere. No, I don't. Of course, I'm a physician, and that helps a little, but so far as field hospital and military work is concerned, I am as ignorant as a baby. I've got to spend months plugging to learn hay foot from straw foot, where, if I had joined the National Guard years ago, I would be fit for almost immediate service.

"It's the same with the rest of you. Why, there isn't a member of the Sphinx that ever had an O. D. uniform on, I'll warrant——"

And then, just as if to belie him, came the pounding of feet on the narrow wooden stairs that led to the tower room; the door swung open, and there in all the glory of a new olive drab uniform, with campaign hat and all, stood a grinning, freckle-faced sandy-haired chap of eighteen.

"Why, Danny Kelly! Well, I'll be blowed," shouted Hobby Austin.

"Wow, look who's here. Where'd you get that uniform?" shouted Buck Sharp. Then:

"When'd you enlist? What outfit? Infantry?

Where's your rifle? What company? When——"

Scores of questions began to fly as every one gathered about the grinning lad in khaki. They came so fast that he ducked his head behind his arm and began to shout at the top of his voice, "Hi, wait a minute—wait—*wait*—WAIT. What do you think I am? Give me room and I'll tell you all about it. Why, hello Professor (as he caught sight of the physician). You're in uniform too? Great! About time some of the rest of the fellows got busy, eh? Don't you think so?" he said, with a wink.

"Right-o, Danny," said Dr. Brockford. "But, say, Danny, you've just made a fibber of me. I said there wasn't a Sphinx chap who ever had a uniform on. And here you turn up right after I made the statement. However, I don't mind being made a story teller on this occasion," he added with a grin.

"Well, how would you have me turn up in these times? Bad luck to me I didn't have one on six months ago, instead of waiting," said Danny, who, although American born and trained, always managed to give a Gaelic twist to his sentences when he became excited.

"And you ask what outfit," he said, turning to the fellows gathered about him; "now what outfit would it be but the "Fighting-Fifth." My old grand-dad, but a year in this country when the

Civil War started, joined the Fifth, and fought in every battle the outfit went into; got wounded at Antietam and Seven Oaks, but they couldn't kill him. And didn't my own father follow his footsteps. Why, my dad was a Captain before he quit five years ago, and for the life of me I can't understand why I never enlisted myself until now. But I'm in it now, fellows," he concluded with undisguised pride.

"Wow, good for Danny, the first of us all to enlist. But you are not the last, for I'm joining the field artillery to-morrow," said Ray Barns, "I think——"

"Here, here, wait now before any more of you decide what you are to do. Just a moment or you'll spoil my plans. I'm here to-night looking for recruits, and before you all decide to sign up I want to make a proposition," interrupted Dr. Brockford, hurriedly.

"What is it Prof.?" came a chorus from a half dozen voices.

"Well, it's this. I've enlisted in the Liberty Hospital Unit, as you know, and made a commission—First Lieutenant. The Unit is filling up fast and there are any number of men and jobs. They are all good men too, but what we need more than anything else, are experienced ambulance drivers—ah-er—I mean fellows who can drive motor cars and who know enough ab-

them to be able to take them apart and take care of them. We need just two more, and when I heard that this morning I thought of you fellows. That's why I telephoned to Ray to have a special meeting called. I want two volunteers. Who will go?"

But he got more than two, as nearly every fellow in the room crowded about him and begged to be taken.

"Well, that's what I thought would happen," said the physician, with a smile. Now I need only two, so settle it among yourselves. I would suggest that——"

"Draw for it," shouted Buck Sharp.

"Just what I was going to say," responded Dr. Brockford.

"Right," came the answers. Then Ray, assuming a dignified air, took his place as Chairman of the Club, rapped his gavel, and in a very business-like way, proceeded to appoint Les Stewart and Hobby Austin tellers, instructing them to put the name of every fellow in the room, save Danny's, of course, on a separate slip of paper, fold it and drop it into Dr. Brockford's campaign hat, which he graciously loaned for the occasion.

And while Les and Hobby are attending to that very serious task, it might be well to take the opportunity to explain at length just

what the Sphinx Club is and who its members are.

Emerson Hall is a big and particularly well known high school. It has traditions. Long before it became a public school it was a very well known private school, its history dating back to Colonial days. Indeed, the colors of the school were buff and blue, the colors used in the uniforms of the Colonial Soldiers of Washington's Continental Army. And it may be interesting to know that nearly a whole company of Colonials was organized at Emerson Hall among the students and sent out to follow Washington in the Revolution.

Of late years, Emerson Hall has been prominent as one of the city's biggest high schools, and the Sphinx Club, to which we have been introduced, is a recently formed alumni organization the story of which is very interesting. Emerson Hall had never had an Honor Society for its graduates, and about four years ago it was decided to start such an association by selecting the four best men in the graduating class. No, the four best *students* were not selected, for everything was taken into consideration. The man who stood high in his class, had done something for the honor of the school on the athletic field and indicated in every way that he was a gentleman, was the man considered, and the selecting of the students was done by the last four boys

elected to the Club, with, of course, the guidance of their faculty advisor, who, for a long time, had been Dr. Brockford.

So well was the organization run, and so wisely had the boys chosen their members, that the organization became recognized as a good influence on the graduating class of the school, and as a result the club was given permission to use the tower room as a meeting place, and the members were given liberties not accorded to students or graduates who had not worked hard enough to win a place in the Club.

That it was a worth-while organization can be seen from the interest that the boys took in it and in the welfare of its members. Indeed, Ray Barns and Buck Sharp had been out of school for four years, being among the original boys selected, and still they came back to every meeting and devoted a great deal of time to the Club's business.

But the declaration of War and the taking up of the Allies' cause by America, threatened for the first time to make a break among the members of the Club. Not a break in friendship, of course; indeed, it would weld that more strongly. But it meant that for the first time, each individual would have to settle a momentous question without considering its effect upon the rest of the boys. There was no way for the Sphinx Club

to become active in a body, for there were several among the members who were not yet of military age, and there were others who had already shouldered responsibilities that could not easily be disposed of. That being the case, it was plainly up to each individual to decide his course of action for himself.

Several of the boys had decided to ask the advice of Dr. Brockford, whom they all thought a great deal of, and Buck Sharp was on the point of visiting the physician, when Ray told him of the fact that the former faculty advisor had already enlisted and that he had asked to have a special meeting called as soon as possible.

Of course most of the boys were eager to go with Dr. Brockford, for ambulance driving appealed to every one of them. But it was apparent that but two could be selected, and, as a result, each one of the lads had about worked out his own course, as in the instance of Danny and Ray Barnes, and they knew that if they were not fortunate enough to be drawn as one of the prospective ambulance drivers, they would soon be in uniform in some other branch of the service.

However, a great deal of interest was displayed in the results of the drawing, and for that reason some rather caustic comments on the slowness of Les and Hobby were made by way of urging them to hurry in making out the slips.

"Aw come on, Les, I'm nervous," said Buck Sharp.

"What are you doing, Les? Loafing?" asked Len Baldwin.

"Never mind, Len, we fixed it so you won't get a chance. We did not put your name in at all," said Les Stewart, as he gathered up the neatly folded slips.

"Well, if my name doesn't come out you will never live to see who wins," said Len threateningly.

"Oh, go 'way," said Les, dropping the handful of papers into Prof. Brockford's hat. "You talk a heap, but my private opinion is you don't want to be drawn, you—ho-ho—what a rotten shot," laughed Les, as he ducked a discarded football head gear that came his way with a vengeance.

"Well, I won't be so careless next time," said Len. Then he added, "Come on, Ray, start the ball rolling."

Ray took the campaign hat, with its precious burden of papers, and looked at Danny.

"Here, Dan, you are not interested in this, you draw 'em out and read 'em off. The last two names drawn are the lucky chaps."

"Right-o," said Danny. "Let me at 'em. Here's the first," as he put his hand into the hat and pulled forth a slip.

"Number one is-is——" he paused, gazed around and grinned.

"Aw, hurry," cried Buck Sharp, "is-is-it—mine?"

"You guessed it," said Danny. "Buck Sharp, you'll have to look for a real job. Come on over and join the 'Fightin' Fifth.'"

"Shucks, just my luck. Well, then, I guess I'm due to join the Cavalry."

"Cavalry—huh—my grand-dad said no one ever saw a dead cavalryman, 'cause they could run away too fast. Come on——"

"You come on and finish up your job," came the protest from several anxious fellows.

"All right, gentlemen. The next man to get his walking papers is—Les Stewart. Ha, ha, Les, you didn't fix it up for yourself, all right."

"Rats, I thought so. Well, I think I would rather be Admiral Stewart than Colonel Stewart anyhow, so I'm for the Naval Militia."

"Yes, Admiral," said Danny contemptuously, as he groped for another slip, "more like, it's Cabin Boy Stewart"; then, as he unfolded a slip, "Another one down, and the name of the lucky chap is—Bud Grant."

"Aw, say, is it really mine?" asked the disappointed boy.

"G-r-a-n-t," spelled Danny, with a wry smile.

"It's your name, Buddy boy, and you can't make anything else out of it.

"Shucks. Well, I always did want to be in the Signal Corps, and I heard to-day the Twenty-seventh is looking for recruits. I sign up to-morrow, fellows."

"Good for you," came the chorus. Then followed urgent requests for Danny to hurry, for every one was getting anxious. And Danny did hurry. Slip after slip was drawn, and with each name shouted out, some one of the fellows looked disappointed. Babe Martin and Bowler Baily, the two youngest of the organization, appeared to be the most disappointed of all, for, they explained, they were too young to enlist, being both a few months under eighteen, and they hoped that they would be drawn and thus have a place provided for them. But when Prof. Brockford explained that they would have to be over eighteen to serve in the hospital corps, they felt better.

"Well, I've only a few months to go," said Babe Martin, "and then I'll be in a uniform, you can bet."

"And I'll be with you," said Bowler Baily.

"Aw, stop your noise, children," said Danny, "and listen to your betters. We've—hi—look out you'll break something." The last was addressed to Bowler Baily who had shied a sofa pillow at him.

"Well, gentlemen," said Danny, peering into the campaign hat, "and now we are down to the last two."

He scooped the slips out of the hat, opened them and grinned broadly.

"Out of my way he shouted as he strode across the room, and with a very ceremonious bow said, "Ladies and Gents—no, no, I mean fellow citizens —allow me to introduce the ambulance drivers to his highness Uncle Sam—fellows, meet Messrs. Len Baldwin and Hobby Austin.

Then what a shout went up as the fellows gathered about the successful candidates and shook hands. Indeed Len and Hobby began to think that they had attained real greatness for they were the center of a wildly enthusiastic lot of boys. Even Prof. Brockford pushed his way across the room and wrung their hands.

"Bully," he said, "I know you fellows will do the work well. And you will like it too."

"Well," said Danny, "they may do all right, but I think they'll envy me when they see the old Fightin' Fifth cleaning up the trenches."

"Oh, we'll have a nice soft stretcher for you, Danny," said Hobby.

"You will not. If I get into a scrap I'll not want the likes of you draggin' me out before I'm finished," said Danny. Then turning to the rest

CHAP. I---"Remember it's the Fightin' Fifth," he said as he ducked through the door.

he said, "And if you fellows want to see some real fighting you should——"

"Join the Fightin' Fifth," came the chorus, and a half dozen fellows fell upon Danny and pummeled him affectionately until he tore lose and rushed for the door.

"Yes, but you won't make fun when you see us in action. Better come on over. Remember it's the *Fightin'* Fifth" he said, as he ducked through the door to avoid a fusillade of sofa pillows aimed his way.

"And then when they thought he had gone, he shouted through the key hole.

"So long, fellows. Better come over and join the Fifth. We'll be the first ones to go to France, you wait and see," and he almost tumbled down the winding tower stairs to get away from the fellows who piled out of the door after him.

CHAPTER II.

DANNY'S PROPHECY FULFILLED.

Danny was due back at the armory in Worthington Avenue at eleven o'clock, for his furlough ended at that time, and it behooved him to hasten if he did not want it to be necessary to make explanations to the Sergeant, Pop Gorham. But with all his desire to hasten, he had time to buy a late evening paper as he hurried from the surface car to the subway to take the uptown express.

Comfortably seated in the subway train, and with his mind still on the recent meeting of the Sphinx, Danny spread the paper open in front of him, and began mechanically to scan it. But he was suddenly aroused to the point of putting his mind on to what he was reading, for in type that fairly screamed, the following headlines stood out:—

"Fighting Fifth"—Probably First Guard Regiment to Go to France

Becomes Nucleus Around Which New "Blue Ribbon Division" Is to Be Organized
Move to Camp Soon

Danny's emotions were conflicting; indeed they were tumbling over each other for he had that all-gone feeling in his stomach which he used to experience just before he went in to pitch an important baseball game, and this was mingled with the pride of a really truly prophet for within the hour he had shouted through a certain keyhole that the "Fighting Fifth" would be the first to go to France, and here was his prophecy all but fulfilled.

"Crackey, what do you think of that?" he said half aloud. "Now I'll bet the fellows will believe me. To France soon! Great."

Then newspaper unattended, he sat there, his mind far afield, romancing and picturing the sights he was soon to see and the fun he was destined to have.

And while Danny is thus pleasantly occupied, it might be well to tell a little more about him, for since he is the first of the Sphinx Club members likely to see actual service "over there," it is only proper that this tale should be devoted entirely to his adventures.

Danny, as you already know, was of Irish-American parentage, of which he was at all times proud. He had been a particularly competent scholar at Emerson Hall during the four years he had attended the big school, but as important as this, was the fact that he had been the best first

team base-ball pitcher the institution had possessed in many a season. In fact since he had made the final squad in his Sophomore year, there had never been any doubt but that he was of championship timber, and in his Senior year, when he was elected to the Sphinx Club, he was captain of the school's first team and honored by being picked pitcher of the all-scholastic team of the city.

A real reputation had Danny. But it did not make a particle of difference to him that he was the hero of every member of the baseball squad. He was a sunny-spirited and happy-go-lucky youth and never took his ability seriously. Indeed he rarely took anything too seriously until something aroused him, and then he became so serious that fur flew in all directions until he attained what he had set out for.

The declaration of war probably stirred this usually dormant fighting ability of Danny's more than anything else, since he captained the Emerson Hall baseball team. Danny from the first was determined that he was going to see action under the Stars and Stripes. His father had and so had his grandfather, and Danny felt a strong desire to follow in their footsteps. The day that the news of war was flashed from Washington, he appeared at his father's office and told him that he wanted to enlist in the "Fighting Fifth."

Mr. J. Oswell Kelly, a well-to-do and very busy contractor, was by nature a very brusque individual, and he waved Danny aside with a curt "Tut, tut, Danny, you're too young yet, son."

However, Danny was of age to be eligible for enlistment with his parents' consent, and his father knew it. So did Danny, and for that reason he visited his father's office every day for the following two weeks and his subject of conversation was always the same. Moreover he held to that subject at home, at breakfast and dinner time and in the evening whenever his father did not have forethought enough to go out somewhere and thus avoid the insistence of his son. It took Danny just twenty days to win his point, and then it was gained only by sheer attrition.

It was not that Mr. Kelly did not want Danny to do his duty, for he was a soldier before he was anything else; but he had not yet lost the idea that his son was still a boy in knickerbockers.

Danny finally persuaded both Mr. and Mrs. Kelly that they had lost count of his birthdays, and in the end they both consented and the erstwhile high school pitcher, thoroughly elated, hied himself over to the armory, with an enlistment application signed by his father, and appeared before the recruiting sergeant.

"I want to enlist," he said crisply.

"What's t' name, me boy," said the big Irish Sergeant.

"Kelly," came the answer.

"T' name fits. Yer enlisted. T' rist is on'y mere details," said the Sergeant with a grin.

So they proved, for Danny passed his physical examination with flying colors, and in twenty-four hours he was in uniform. That was three days before our story opens, and in that brief time Danny learned to like the regiment so well that he was eager to persuade some of the members of the Sphinx Club to join, too, and as he sat there in the subway he felt rather put out that he had not been able to win at least one recruit.

"Ah, well, they'll be sorry. But I suppose it's a question we've all to decide for ourselves. I for one am glad I'm in, and if this train will only hurry I'll get to the armory some time to-night and find out how the news has affected the boys."

However, the express arrived at Fourteenth Street betimes, and after a change to a local car, Danny soon reached the neighborhood of the armory. From a distance it was evident that events of more than usual consequence were transpiring, for a company of soldiers had already been detailed to keep back a large crowd of anxious relatives and friends, who were fearful that the regiment might pick up and fly to France almost any moment.

Danny elbowed his way through the jostling crowd, and passing the line of soldier policemen, hurried into the armory. Inside the big building, things seemed at first glance to be just chaos. Hundreds of uniformed men were hurrying about here and there working like beavers. Most of them were stripped of jackets and even flannel shirts and were bending to their tasks with a will. The floor of the big drill hall was littered with piles of army cots, tents, camping utensils, and a thousand and one other things. But in spite of the apparent disorder, it did not take Danny long to realize that everything was proceeding systematically and that these big piles were fast being reduced as truck load after truck load was carried through the big side door of the building, tumbled aboard waiting motors, and whisked out into the night bound for some point of mystery.

Running a gauntlet of hurrying infantrymen in the entrance hall, Danny found his company room, and reported to his Sergeant, Pop Gorham, as he was known among the men of Company CC. Briefly the Sergeant told him that the squad he belonged to had been detailed to the loading of motor trucks outside the building, and Danny after a search found six perspiring privates and a corporal outside the building, in Twenty-first Street, struggling with a huge pile

of camp cots that had to be loaded into one of the big gray-green motor trucks.

"Hi, Danny, you're needed here," said Corporal Hughes, when he saw the young infantryman.

"Sure you're a welcome sight, me bhoy. Come put yer shoulder-r ferninst this and give a heave," grunted Mickey O'Connor, staggering under a load of cots.

"Don't yuh do it, Danny. Come give your old pard Dawson a hand," shouted Private Dawson, who was known to Danny and the rest of the men of the squad as Cross Dawson, because of a heavy pair of eyebrows and a wrinkled forehead which always gave him the appearance of scowling crossly.

"Aw, you are both weaklings, I see where I'll have to help the both of you," said Danny goodnaturedly, as he peeled off his jacket. And presently he was hustling with the rest.

Until far into the morning they worked, and Danny and the other members of the squad were all fagged out when men came to their relief and gave them a chance to crawl into their blankets inside the armory and catch some well earned sleep.

For three days and three nights the hectic rush kept up. Danny and every one else about the big armory worked hour after hour getting things ready for the departure of the command. But meanwhile rumors and gossip came thick and

fast, and it was not long before Danny was as well posted as the rest as to just what was to happen to the famous old fighting regiment.

"We're going to have one mighty big outfit before we get through," Cross Dawson told him. "They are going to add a couple of Companies from three other regiments. Then they are going to change our name and put us into camp down at Minerwa until the rest of the division is fully organized. Oh, we're goin' to have some swell outfit when we get all fixed up. What?"

"I say, are we really going to France first?" asked Danny.

"You bet your boots we are. I'll guarantee we'll be over there in a couple of months. Am I glad I picked out the Fighting Fifth to enlist in? I just guess I am. We're going to be the Blue Ribbon Division, we are, with picked troops from all over the country. Say, some of the fellows from my own State are going to be with us. Yep, the First Ambulance Company of Nebraska will be part of the division, but there are a heap more than that coming. Infantrymen from Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Ohio, Georgia, Alabama and artillery from Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and troops from a lot of other places. Man, we're goin' to have some outfit."

"Won't it be great?" enthused Danny. Then he added, "Say but we'll have the jump on a lot

of other New York regiments, and I'll bet some of my friends in the Sphinx Club will be mighty sorry they didn't take my advice."

True to Dawson's prediction, the next day saw three companies of men from a crack New York regiment filing into the armory to become a part of the old "Fighting Fifth." Things moved in whirlwind fashion after that, for there remained but little time before the regiment would move on to camp, and there were a million and one things to be done. There was daily inspection, medical examination, vaccinations, injections to guard against typhoid, which every man had to undergo, and mustering in ceremonies by which act the regiment became the United States National Guard instead of the Guard of the State of New York. And along with all this came the work of loading the endless stream of motor transports that appeared at the side doors of the armory, with the endless piles of baggage and equipment needed by the regiment at camp.

All furloughs had been cancelled now and it was only a question of hours before the columns of khaki clad men would file out of the big armory. Hundreds of people lined the curb outside the building, most of them relatives of the men of the regiment, hoping and waiting for an opportunity to say a last good-bye.

Along toward noon, Danny got a slight respite

from his labors, for while he was lugging about huge armfuls of cots inside the armory, along with Dawson and O'Connor, who should come picking their way through the mass of men and equipment in the crowded drill hall but Mr. and Mrs. Kelly, escorted by Major Turner, who in days gone by had been first lieutenant under Danny's father when he was Captain of Company V. Because of the fact that he was a former veteran of the Regiment and because he had many friends among the officers, Mr. Kelly and Danny's mother were accorded special privileges and permitted entrance to the armory.

Danny, dusty and dirty from head to foot, greeted his mother and father affectionately, and began pouring out all the news he had heard about what the future held for the boys of the Fighting Fifth, and Mr. Kelly and Major Turner could not help but grin at his enthusiasm, while Mrs. Kelly surreptitiously wiped away a tear and tried bravely to smile too.

To his father and mother and to Danny the moments left for a parting farewell were all too brief, but with the assurance that they would be frequent visitors at Camp Wills later on Mr. and Mrs. Kelly left the scenes of turmoil within the cluttered drill shed.

Time for departure was growing short indeed. Danny realized that when he saw his mother

and father turn their backs upon him and hurry away, and for a moment a very lonesome and homesick feeling gripped him. He began to wonder just what the future held for him, and the thoughts that went racing through his head were none too pleasant. But fortunately they were scattered by Mickey O'Connor who was working beside him.

"It was your daddy that the Major br-rought in to see ye, Danny?"

"Yes," said Danny, "my Dad used to be Captain of V Company."

"And wid sich an ancestry yuh mane t' tell me, Danny, yer sthar-rtin' in a pr-rivate?" said Mickey in surprise.

"It's the way my Dad started, and it's the way his Daddy before him started in this very same outfit," said Danny with just pride.

"Ah, sur-re then it's Mickey for t' kape an eye on you, son, fer yer bound t' be at laste a Major-r Ginneral," said the good-natured Irishman.

"You're wrong," spoke up Cross Dawson, "Danny's not cut for a Major General. More likely he'll be a dandy fine pitcher on the Company's baseball team, judgin' from the long soup bone he's got for a right arm."

"Baseball team," said Danny. "Has the company a team?"

"Well I just guess we have—or at least we had

when we were down at the Texas border last year. Trimmed everything in sight," replied Dawson. "Just wait till we get to camp and you'll see some baseball playing."

"Well I'm a candidate right off," said Danny, as he shouldered a bundle of cots, and Dawson following his example proceeded toward the door.

How it all happened Danny did not exactly know. He saw a man staggering under an armful of tent sections moving in his general direction. Danny passed him and narrowly avoided a collision, but the next second he heard a crash, grunts and then some very caustic remarks, and turning about he saw Dawson and the other man, a heavy set, blonde-haired man from Company DD, sprawled out on the floor with camp cots and sections of canvas strewn about. Both of them were on their feet in a moment, and the DD Company man with a string of invectives stepped threateningly toward the Nebraskan and aimed a blow at him.

That was enough for the short tempered Dawson. In a moment his eyes flashed fire, his sinewy arms shot up and a knotty fist caught the blonde-haired man full on the nose. Arms, legs and fists flew after that and in the briefest possible space of time the two of them were rolling over and over on the floor pummelling each other, while shouts of enthusiasm rang out across the

armory and busy infantrymen dropped their burdens to watch the fight.

It did not last long, however, for Pop Gorham, the top Sergeant, appeared, and with the help of Danny and Mickey O'Connor pried the men apart and sent them on their ways after a good tongue lashing.

"Be dad," said Mickey O'Connor to Danny, after the rumpus was straightened out. "That man Dawson shud be a Irishman. If he ain't he is an' he don't know it, even if he does come from Nebrasky where iver that is. Sure he fights like an Irishman 'tis certain, an' some day he'll lick thot there feller from DD Company. Thot's t' sicond time they been at it in lessen a week an' thot's how long t' DD Company's man's been here."

The fight, though it accomplished nothing for its participants, served to clear the atmosphere, as it were, for the men, tired and sullen and more or less grouchy before it occurred, seemed to perk up considerably after that and go about their tasks with renewed vigor, and the result was that in a few hours the big drill floor was cleared once more and everything was ready for an early start for Camp Wills next morning.

CHAPTER III.

The Wurra-Wurra Squad.

Bugle calls that echoed and re-echoed through the big dome roofed drill hall of the armory and made thrills run up and down the spine of Danny Kelly and every other man of the Fighting Fifth brought them all to attention. Then,

"Right by Squads! Forward! Ho!" came the commands echoing from company to company, and the thousands of men in the big armory began to move forward in squads and with snappy steps, filed out of the armory, into Worthington Avenue, and began the first stage of their long journey, which months later, and after many stops, was to bring them to France and the first line trenches.

But the immediate objective of the command was the big Pennsylvania Terminal where they were to entrain for Camp Wills at Minerwa and Hampton Plains, there to go into training and to await the coming of the many other units that were to make up the famous Blue Ribbon Division.

Through thoroughfares lined with flag bedecked buildings and crowded to the curb with

thousands of cheering men and women, the boys in khaki stepped forth briskly to the stirring tune of "Over There," and cheer after cheer went up from along the line of march as the tramping soldiers went swinging by.

Many a pathetic scene was enacted along the Avenue that day, for here and there mothers broke through the line of policemen guarding the curb and dashed out to give their sons a last hug and kiss good-bye. Danny saw many a moist eye among the boys of the regiment, and he was quite conscious of a big lump in his own throat, too, as he caught sight of his mother's fluttering handkerchief and bravely smiling face in the crowd near the terminal. Danny's father was there also, and he put a lot more spirit into the boy from Emerson Hall, for he waved enthusiastically when he caught sight of his son and shouted:

"The best of luck, Danny," in a most enthusiastic way.

"Sure you've a brick of a Daddy, Danny, and a fine little mither, too," whispered Mickey O'Connor, who marched shoulder to shoulder with him.

"No one knows it better than I do, Mickey," whispered Danny softly.

And Cross Dawson, who was on Danny's left, and had caught the exchange of whispers, said, "You don't know how lucky you are, Danny.

Mine's been dead for seven years now and my dad too. There isn't a person in that whole crowd to wish me well," which made Danny and sentimental Mickey very sorry for him.

"Niver mind, me bhoy, there's those that shoulder-r t' shoulder-r wid ye as wish ye t' bist o' luck always. You say so too eh, Danny?"

"You're right, I do," said Danny in spite of the fact that Corporal Hughes was glaring at the trio for talking in the ranks.

Entraining was not as difficult a problem as Danny expected it would be, for company after company filed down the long inclined run-way, and were marched to their proper platform where five sections of a special train with fifty cars in all was waiting for the infantrymen.

With more order than a rush hour crowd, the several thousand men filed into the spacious steel cars, and presently with seats for all provided, every one was comfortable and in the best of humor. Danny and the two young men who had already become his chums, along with Corporal Hughes, occupied seats facing each other and the four of them made a jolly party during the hour or two consumed to move them through tunnels and under the East River and on out to Hampton Plains. And during that time the three privates learned a lot that was interesting about a number of changes that had been brought about

in the military organizations of this country as a result of the influence of the big war across the seas in which they were soon destined to take an active part.

Asked Mickey curiously of Corporal Hughes, "Say, Corporal, it's you who could tell us something about this Blue Ribbon Division we're a part of.

"Well, you see when they were selecting outfits to compose this new division down there in Washington they picked regiments from all over the country and twenty-seven different states are represented, I think, and when our Commander, General Munn, looked over the map and saw the number of different places the organization came from, he said, 'If we should draw a line through all the points on the map from which these regiments will be taken, it would show that we have the blue ribbon regiments from New York to Texas!' And after that every one called it the Blue Ribbon Division, in spite of the fact that it is officially the 4-8th Division. It's a bully name, I think."

"It is that," said Mickey.

"A division," went on the Corporal, just by way of being chatty, "is composed of 27,150 men now, where it used to be 30,000 men in this country. But there is more field artillery in the new division than in the old. For instance there are

four infantry regiments and one battalion of machine gun companies—about 16,420 men—in each division and this forms the basis for the whole outfit.

"To support these infantrymen there is a brigade of three regiments of field artillery and one trench mortar battery composed of 5,068 men all told, a regiment of engineers of 1,666 men and a machine gun battalion of four companies of 768 men. These four units all work together, the artillery supporting the foot soldiers, forming barrages, which help them in their charges, softening up the enemies' trenches before they charge and throwing a barrage far in front of them so the enemy cannot get reinforcements while they are attacking. The engineers, of course, do all the engineering work such as laying out the divisions' camps, arranging for gun emplacements, planning barbed-wire layouts, sapping and mining and all that, but the infantry has to help them in a great many ways, and protect them while they are at work, so you see it is like a big series of wheels, one wheel depending upon another and all working together. Then, of course, there is a battalion of field signal men whose work is signalling for both the infantry and artillery."

"I guess they've nearly done away with the cavalry now," said Cross Dawson. "Out in our

state in the old days we had some fine cavalry outfits."

"Yes," said Corporal Hughes, "cavalry isn't much use in trench fighting so in place of the cavalry the divisions now have their battalions of machine gunners. They are the boys who rip and tear things up, and stand by to protect us fellows, help us in our charges, and back us up when we are attacked. Oh, the machine gunners are a fine lot of fellows, and a nervy set, too, let me tell you. They call themselves the 'Suicide Club' because they know that a lot of them who join will never come back."

"Of course," continued the Corporal, "I have named only the big sections that comprise a division; the fighting sections as it were. To keep the soldiers supplied with provisions and ammunition, and to provide care and attention for the wounded, and in every way assist the fighters, there are other sections such as ammunition trains, supply trains, a special supply train for the engineers to carry their working tools and materials, and a sanitary train in which the division's hospital outfit is included. Then with it all are the executive headquarters division and the military police, who patrol the camps."

"Mighty interesting," said Danny, "but they have made some changes in the regiments, too. They are larger now, aren't they?"

"Indeed they are," assured the Corporal. "In the old days 1,000 or 1,200 men made a regiment. Now a regiment is composed of 3,755 men and officers. That's why they added those companies from the other regiments to our outfit. Had to bring it up to war strength you know. Each regiment has three battalions of four rifle companies, and each company is composed of 250 men and six officers, which is very much larger than the old order of companies. Then there is a machine gun company with each regiment, a headquarters company, a supply company and a medical detachment.

"Huh, I should say a division was a mighty nice handful of men to handle," said Dawson.

"It's just about right," said Corporal Hughes. "When all the men are well trained things work out very smoothly and division after division can be ordered anywhere without much fuss or flurry. And you just wait and see what a cracking good division this Blue Ribbon outfit will make. It will be—eh, what—aeroplanes—where?"

"There, up there," said Danny pointing eagerly out of the window, "seven, eight, nine of them. Say, don't they look fine?"

Everybody craned their necks to catch a glimpse of the huge birdlike things that sailed gracefully around over the train, then cheers

burst forth from the infantrymen as they realized that they were nearing their destination.

"They come from the aviation school at Hampton or somewheres near there, and that's mighty close to where we are going into camp," said Corporal Hughes. "I wouldn't be surprised——"

But before he finished speaking, there came the sigh of air and the crunching of brake-shoes, and the train came to a stop with a jerk. Then there was a rustle and scurry of feet, the grabbing up of outfits and the clatter of rifles, and the scuffle of scores of soldiers working their way down crowded aisles toward the car doors. Danny and his chums were in with the rest of the push and presently they all found themselves out in the open once more, after much crowding and good natured jostling.

Crisply and sharply came the command to fall in, and line after line of soldiers formed on the cinders beside the railroad track, and filed on past the seemingly never-ending line of day coaches which they had just quitted.

There was a snap and vigor about this detraining. The thousands of shifting figures in khaki, coupled with the sound of scuffling feet, and the far-off notes of the military band, thrilled Danny as he never had been thrilled before. It was all so big and fine and glorious, that he was thor-

oughly pleased to be a part of it. And then the thing that set off the entire picture and made him feel the importance of it all, was the appearance of the half dozen smoothly gliding aeroplanes circling round and round overhead, the muffled roar of their motors, sounding to Danny as if they were very high up in the blue dome of the sky, keeping a watchful eye over everything.

Once more came the command:

"Squads Right! Forward! Ho!" and off swung the Fighting Fifth through the cinders of the freight yard and on out along dusty sunbaked country roads, bound for the big camp that was fast being laid out not far away.

The arrival at camp, which was accomplished quickly and in excellent order, was the beginning of another breathlessly busy period for the men in khaki, for in spite of the fact that a great deal had already been done to make the place comfortable, there remained a great deal for the infantrymen to do before they turned in that night.

Danny's first view of the camp revealed to him line upon line of dusty brown tents, each large enough to accommodate a full squad of eight men. The tents were arranged so that broad streets ran between each row, the tents of a single company flanking both sides of the thoroughfare. At the far end of each street was the company kitchen and mess hall and beyond that the

officers' tents. No more plausible or systematic arrangement could have been conceived, thought Danny, for the squads of men were placed just like neighbors in a huge town, each street representing a company and each group of streets a regiment. And beyond these streets were other streets, the communities of other regiments. As far as the eye could reach were tents, tents and more tents. Danny could hardly conceive of so much canvas. It was a tent city indeed.

But he had little time to observe any more than passing details just then, for presently his company was assigned to its street and each squad was assigned to its tent. Then under the direction of Corporal Hughes, the members of the squad were detailed to a hasty putting in order of the interior of the tent. At the far end of the street Danny had noted huge piles of army cots to which more were being added with the arrival of every motor truck. Danny, Mickey, Dawson and the rest of the squad were presently instructed to visit this pile and draw their cots, too, returning immediately to their tents to put their beds in order. And following this came more details and more work, until every one about the camp was tired, dusty and perspiring.

Then suddenly in the height of it all Danny and the rest of the squad were electrified by the crisp sharp blare of bugles. Danny did not recog-

nize the call for he had never heard it before, but Corporal Hughes and Dawson recognized it immediately.

"Wow! Trouble! Fall in, boys! Quick now!" commanded the Corporal.

"Fire Call!" shouted Dawson.

As if shot from a gun the squad members leapt for the doorway of the tent. And every other tent along the line was belching forth infantrymen, too. Out of the tail of his eye Danny caught sight of a cloud of gray smoke rising skyward and the flash of flames upleaping, at the lower end of the company street, as mechanically he took his place between Dawson and Mickey.

"By the right flank! Ho! Double time," commanded Corporal Hughes and presently Danny and the rest of the squad were racing toward the point where several tents were in a blaze.

Then the boy from Emerson Hall got some idea of the system and concerted action with which guardsmen work, for in a twinkle bucket lines were formed down the street, hose lines were coupled at every water outlet in the vicinity, and in a few seconds water was being poured onto the blazing canvas, while members of the squad whose tents were burning rescued their equipment and personal effects.

And while all this was taking place, tents all about the fire swept area began to melt away

before Danny's eyes. They came down like magic, were rolled up and carried out of danger, and in a briefer space of time than it takes to tell of it, all the tents in the immediate vicinity of those on fire had been removed, thus isolating the flames to the three tents that were burning, and giving the fire no possible chance of spreading in any direction! It was the finest sort of team work Danny had ever seen, and it pleased him immensely.

His squad had become a part of the long line of men passing buckets from the water trough near the company kitchen, and as the laden buckets traveled through his hands he had plenty of chance to watch the way the fire was conquered. But when the hose lines were brought into action the flames were literally slapped and spattered out in a few seconds, and the fire peril that threatened the canvas city was stifled before it had fairly started.

"Some fire fighters," said Danny, enthusiastically, as the command was given to fall out and return to quarters.

"Yes, and some mess to be cleaned up," commented Dawson. "I'm mighty glad it wasn't in our section of the street."

Back to work went the infantrymen, and in a few moments, had it not been for the charred remains of the three tents that were fast being

removed, one would never have known that the boys in khaki had been interrupted. Indeed by the time retreat was sounded, new tents had taken the place of those destroyed, the tents that had been taken down had been re-erected, and the camp looked just the same as it had when the troops had entered.

Mess call did not come any too soon for Danny that evening, nor was his appetite at all dull, when with mess tin, cup and eating utensils clanking noisily, he joined the line of waiting infantrymen, who filed slowly past the cooks at the company kitchen and received a tremendous portion of beef stew, along with all the vegetables he could eat and a huge cup of delicious coffee. Mickey and Dawson, together with Tommy Ryan and Brick Logan, all members of his squad, were in the mess line together, and were served about the same time, so that when they fell out they naturally gravitated together to the most secluded spot they could find, and settled down for a thoroughly congenial party. It was at mess time more than at any other time that the men of the squad got thoroughly acquainted with each other, and Danny came to the conclusion right off that the men who were to fight shoulder to shoulder with him later on were about as fine a set of fellows as he could want to meet. Tommy Ryan in private life was a clerk in a law

office and a student at New York Law School, while Brick Logan was a former newspaper photographer whom Danny had often seen snapping pictures on the baseball field.

Mickey was a fine looking, black-haired and blue-eyed Irish boy who had not been in this country very long, having come from Ireland to become a clerk in a New York exporting house, and Cross Dawson with the beetling eye brows, whose nature belied his almost slanderous soubriquet, was a really fine strapping big Westerner, who reminded Danny of a huge good-natured black bear until—well Danny had already seen him when he was aroused and he knew the anger that flashed from his dark eyes. Dawson, who was just a little older than the rest of the fellows of the squad, being about twenty-three, knew a lot about mines and mining. He had worked in a promoter's office ever since he had been East.

There were other members of the squad, too, who were really worthwhile chaps. There were Ned O'Toole, recently full-back of the Lawton High School football team, and Freddy Daily, a quick-witted little Irishman who vied with Mickey as the company humorist. Then, of course, there was Corporal Hughes, who to Danny seemed every bit as good a soldier as Sergeant Gorham, or Lieutenant Boyle. Danny was certain that time would move Corporal Hughes

up to where he would possess silver shoulder bars, and Danny was right in this conjecture as later events proved.

Taking it all in all the boy from Emerson Hall was certain that he could not have picked out a better outfit to enlist in, for besides a mighty fine set of fellows, Captain Ragan, the company commander, whom the fellows called Daddy Ragan when not addressing him, was really a prince and a very fatherly sort of man. And all of his Lieutenants without an exception, followed his example in their attitude towards the men.

Danny was thinking along these lines while he was consuming his beef stew, and for a few moments he had become very quiet while the rest of the fellows chatted. But he was aroused to the conversation that was being carried on by a playful jolt from Dawson which made him spill a spoonful of stew he was in the act of conveying to his mouth.

"Hi, Danny, you talk so little I was afraid you might be getting lockjaw," said Dawson.

"Lockjaw is it. Sur're his jaws won't close, he's been openin' 'em so wide t' shove t' food in. Danny, did yuh hear what Tommy Ryan was sayin'?" said Mickey.

"No," replied Danny.

"Thin ye've missed a chanst t' have an evenin's amusement," came back from Mickey. "Tommy

says there's t' be a hazin' over in DD Company's street betwixt daylight and dark t'night."

"Yes, my old friend Bailey," said Dawson.

"Who?"

"Bailey or Bully which ivver 'tis," said Mickey. "T' spalpeen what Dawson's tried t' lick twict. Tommy says he's t' most on-popular feller in DD Company. And there's whisper-rs about that he'll be trated accordingly to-night. A Company DD man told Tommy, eh Tommy?"

"Sur-re and he's sinding out engraved invetations t' us bhoys," said Tommy.

"We'll be there, eh Danny?" said Dawson, and Danny assured him that they would.

Mess over Danny was instructed in the art of washing dishes in camp. The beef stew was greasy and Danny tried mightily to rub off the scum that remained on his tin plate, while dousing the dish under the water faucet provided for dishwashing purposes. But when he saw Dawson pick up a handful of dirt and gravel and scrub his plate off with that first, Danny proceeded to do likewise and found that the gritty substance took off the grease where water was of no avail.

"It's a trick we all learned down at the border," said Dawson as they walked back to their tent.

It was a delightful evening, and the men all lingered about the doorways of their tents, smoking and exchanging stories, for a long time, and

Danny heard some mighty interesting things about life in the army.

Then as the shadows began to lengthen and dusk came on, the boy from Emerson Hall noted that one by one the men began to disappear very silently, dodging down behind their tents and crossing over into DD Company Street. Finally Mickey and Tommy slipped between the tents and crossed over, and then he and Dawson made the trip.

In DD Company Street, scores of phantom like figures moved about, and at the lower end, away from the officers' tents, Danny noted a particularly large gathering of shadowy forms.

He and Dawson hurried toward this group of infantrymen, and pushing their way through the crowd soon found themselves on the outer edge of a circle of men in the center of which stood a pathetic figure, stripped to the waist and looking for all the world like a Fiji Islander. Danny had a hard time to recognize the man as the one who had jostled Dawson in the armory the day before. A big grotesque looking face (it proved to be of green paint) was marked in uncertain lines on his naked back and another on his bared chest while various dabs of the same stuff were smeared all over him.

Evidently the DD Company men had had a difficult time with Bailey, for there were unmis-

takable signs of a struggle. Now, however, the unhappy Bailey was bound and gagged, and almost helpless. But still he struggled and writhed and tried to kick.

"Oh, he raised the dust for fair," said a DD man to Danny, "and he's some fighter I tell you. And that's why we are giving it to him now. He wants to fight all the time. We like fighters in DD Company but not his kind. He picks on everybody. He's just a rough neck."

"What he needs," said Dawson, "is a good trimming from some one. That would tame him down."

"Well he's getting some fashionable trimming now," said the DD Company man with a grin.

"Yes, but he'll be worse than ever after this," said Dawson, "until some one licks him in a fair fight. That takes the starch out of that kind of a fellow and makes a pretty good chap out of 'em quite often."

At the time of Danny's arrival, two soldiers were holding the struggling Bailey while another one grasped the rope around his feet. Then with a quick jerk the bully was upset, and brought to the ground in a sitting position.

"There ye are, me bhoy," said an unmistakable Irishman. "Now yer t' have a very nice Summer hair cut. 'Twill be a fancy wan at thot, nivver fear. We are doin' this for your own good.

You're a rough neck and we want to smooth ye off a bit."

A big infantryman advanced toward the center of the circle brandishing a hair clipper.

"Sure I borred it from t' barber an' glad he was t' lind it to me fer sich a laudable pur-rpose," he said as he displayed the clippers.

Then while a man held the bully's head still, the erstwhile barber applied the clippers, cutting a two-inch path through the man's hair from the back of his neck to his forehead.

"Ar-rtistic I call it," said the man with the clippers as he backed off and surveyed his work. "Ar-rtistic and very nate fer a growing young man. Sur're I'll not touch it again fer fear I might sphoil it." Then Dawson who was beside Danny pushed his way into the circle and advanced toward the Irishman with the clippers.

"Not to interfere with a private party, but the fifth squad of CC Company would like to contribute a little something to the occasion," he said ceremoniously, at the same time offering the DD Company man a little bottle with a brush sticking from the top.

"This," said Dawson, "is some essence of Wurra-Wurra, guaranteed to produce a fine complexion."

"Ah sur-re, essince o' Wurra-Wurra," said the Irishman with a grin, catching on quickly. " 'Tis

t' very stuff we've been wantin' all night. Let's have it."

Then to the man on the ground.

"Ye close yer eyes now if ye don't want to be sor-ry. Thin I'll give ye wan fine wurra-wurra complexion. 'Twill be a great disguise. T' Lef-tenant will nivver know ye in the marnin'!" and forthwith he began to paint the man's face with a liquid that made him look very black even in the darkness.

But hardly had the complexion artist finished his work, when at a point from the upper end of the company's street came a soft whistle. It was the signal that an officer was about. Instantly the big crowd of infantrymen began to melt away, disappearing into tents, and by short cuts back to their own company streets. Two men seized Bailey and the pile of clothes that lay beside him and hustled him into his own tent, and in a thrice not a sign of the hazing was to be seen.

Back at their own tent once more, Danny began to feel sorry for the unfortunate Bailey, and he told Dawson as much.

"Oh, don't waste any pity on him," said the Westerner. "He's the most unpopular man in DD Company. He is a bully and a plain hard nut, and until some one takes his aggressiveness out of him, he'll always be a trouble-maker. He

joined the outfit about two weeks before you did, and almost the first day he picked a fight with Tommy Ross, a little fellow in DD Company and nearly killed the poor boy. And Tommy was the pet of DD Company, so that put Bailey in bad, right off. He's picked a dozen fights since and bullied everybody until now he's mighty unpopular and DD Company don't like him at all. What he needs is to have some one who can do it, pitch into him and lick him good, and if I ever get a chance I'm going to try my hand at it. We all admire a good fighter who fights because he has a just cause, but we don't like roughs and rowdies. I'll bet he's as mad as anything at me now; but I hope he is. I want a good chance to take a fall out of him."

"Say what was that wurra-wurra essence?" queried Danny.

"Ha, ha, I just thought of the name on the spur of the moment. Good Irish name. Ho, ho, and when Bailey tries to get it off, wow! Why it was a bottle of waterproof India ink I had in my kit bag. Wurra-wurra from the Fifth Squad CC Company. Ha, ha," roared Dawson.

The Westerner was right, too. Bailey never forgot the wurra-wurra essence, for the next morning he appeared a very sorry looking sight. And whenever an infantryman caught sight of his besmudged and woebegone looking counte-

nance they shouted "wurra-wurra" and roared with laughter.

For a while Dawson lost his nickname of Cross, and was known as Wurra-wurra Dawson for his part in the episode, but later the name was applied to every member of the Fifth Squad of CC Company, and then one morning appeared a cardboard sign over the doorway of their tent announcing:

Headquarters of the
WURRA-WURRA SQUAD

It was put there by some wag from DD Company, and always thereafter the squad was known by that name throughout the division, Danny, Mickey, Dawson and the rest taking great pride in the distinction.

And there came a time when Bailey, too, took an equal share of pride in the name; indeed, instead of hating it he liked it, but that is getting ahead of my story.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH A BULLY IS TAMED.

Active training began the very next day. But to Danny the training was a bit of a disappointment at first, for he had hoped to plunge immediately into bayonet work, trench bombing and all that sort of thing. The wise heads who took care of the activities of the Blue Ribbon Division, however, had planned no such thing for the guardsmen. Their idea was to prepare the men physically first, to be able to withstand the rigors of highly concentrated training, and their wisdom proved itself to Danny and to the rest of the men as well. Although the former Emerson Hall pitcher always kept himself in what he thought to be excellent physical condition, he soon found that there were several hundred muscles in his body that needed stretching and exercising to make them strong and durable.

And Danny was better off than many of the men in the various commands, at that, for some of them had spent long and tedious hours at desks and secured little exercise. To these fellows, the first few days' training proved to be all that

they had bargained for and they dragged themselves back to camp, foot tired, weary and so done up physically that they rolled into their blankets as soon as they possibly could and slept for hours to rest their exhausted bodies.

Long marches were the first of the training "stunts" as Danny called them, and for hours khaki clad lines wended their way over the landscape traveling dusty country roads mile after mile, shouldering rifles that grew heavier by the minute until they began to feel like telegraph poles.

Day after day these hikes were indulged in until the men began to harden up so that they would stand the most grilling sort of tramps under hot sun or in rainy or blustery weather. And meanwhile preparations were under way for more strenuous, and more interesting forms of training. Athletic fields were being laid out by the engineers on a broad plain some distance from the camp, and rumor had it that great cases of athletic equipment, footballs, baseballs, boxing gloves, and a host of other things to delight a fellow's heart, were arriving at the various storehouses, all of which held promise of a great deal of fun.

Meanwhile, however, the Blue Ribbon Division was growing by leaps and bounds. The Fighting Fifth now wearing a new numerical designation,

had been practically the first unit of the division to arrive in camp, but each day saw long troop trains come puffing into the railroad yard to unload hundreds upon hundreds of khaki clad men from all sections of the country. Regiments from Pennsylvania, the middle west, and even the coast (far off California being represented), detrained at the station, and came marching into camp to take their places beside the Fighting Fifth. And daily, too, motor trucks, ammunition vans, field hospital outfits, artillery units, trundled into camp adding a lot to the warlike atmosphere that prevailed on every hand.

To Danny all this was quite wonderful and highly interesting and he reveled in the new scenes that were brought to his notice with every passing twenty-four hours. The shifting of great bodies of troops from all corners of the country to this one point on Long Island was really a remarkable piece of work, and he marveled at the brains that had planned it and the men who had executed these plans.

There was a host of activities within the camp, too, some of which Danny lost track of while others were brought very close to home. It was the purpose of the commanding general and the rest of the officers, to have only men of the highest physical qualifications included in the various commands within the division, and for that

reason a careful inspection was being made of every individual. Any incipient form of disease, nerve or heart trouble, and maladies of that sort were being vigorously searched for and the unfortunates who could not qualify as absolutely perfect men were being given their discharge.

Of credit to the entire outfit, however, was the fact that there were very few rejections. Danny worried somewhat, for fear that investigation might disclose a weakness that he knew nothing of, but he and practically all of his friends in CC Company went through with flying colors. Indeed, as Mickey O'Connor characterized it, they were "a bunch o' huskies be-dad."

Then soon came the really rigorous training; the hardening process that was to make them all strong and fit for trench warfare. Of course only athletics can develop such strength and hardiness, and athletics were encouraged to a great degree, and certain forms were made part of the regular training routine, as, for instance, boxing, football, cane rushes, wrestling, bayonet exercise and setting up drills.

But you may be mighty sure that baseball was not overlooked at all. Indeed the regiment had been in camp but a few days when word went around that the company's baseball team was being organized by Corporal Wiley, and that games with other company teams from other

units were being arranged for Wednesdays and Saturdays, which were visiting days at the big camp. Candidates were to report that evening after retreat at the west end of the parade grounds.

Of course Danny was among the first candidates to appear that evening and when Corporal Wiley saw him he recognized him right off as the former crack pitcher of the Emerson Hall team.

"I know you, Danny Kelly," he exclaimed when Danny gave in his name. "I played against you many a time on the St. John's Academy team."

"Ted Wiley, by crackey," exclaimed Danny, shaking hands vigorously. "Best second baseman St. John's ever had."

"Well you sure are a find. I was wondering what Company CC would do for a slab artist. Rooney, the fellow we had down at the Texas border, has left the outfit. Time expired. But now there'll be no need for worry."

And there was no need for worry, for Danny fitted in magnificently and soon became one of the star twirlers of the regiment. Company CC developed a real team, too, and the contests that took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays were worth while seeing. Dawson, strong tall and fearless, held down the first sack and the solid and immovable Mickey O'Connor, who could hold

the hottest sizzler Danny could fling, did the receiving behind the bat.

With such a combination in the field, Company CC held down the most formidable aggregation that the regiment could produce, and defeated teams from the Michigan, Pennsylvania, Alabama and Illinois units in fine shape. If the division had stayed in camp long enough there is no question but that there would have been a divisional championship series arranged, and certainly Company CC's team would have represented the Fighting Fifth.

But baseball was more diversion than training, for the men were given really violent exercise during all hours of the day. Particularly were the cane rushes developed, for it gave the infantrymen all they wanted of rough and tumble work. Wrestling too was encouraged along with football, which usually resulted in hard-fought games from which every one would return thoroughly tired and tuckered out.

Boxing, however, was given the most careful attention, for the art of self-defense was considered vital to men who would later on employ almost the same sort of tactics with a sharply pointed bayonet instead of padded mitts.

Glove practice became a matter of daily work very soon, and under the tutelage of some champions of the game, the men were instructed in all

sorts of feints, leads and counters. Long lines of infantrymen would square off and face each other, and then selecting the man facing as an opponent, proceed to practice the various leads and counters until each pair would warm up to a lively sparring bout and whale away at each other for minutes at a time regardless of bleeding noses or black eyes.

It was great fun and Danny liked that sort of work too. He became quite an expert with the gloves, and had some lively set-tos with his sparring partners. But as hard as he worked he never could approach the skill of his side partner, Cross Dawson.

The big broad-shouldered Westerner was a marvel with the gloves. He seemed to be a born boxer, and there was no question but that he had had considerable practice previous to his appearance at camp. His alertness and dexterity with the gloves called for a great deal of comment from the boxing instructors and the officers who watched the men at practice, and it soon became a difficult task to select a sparring partner that was equal to him.

That may have been the reason why on one eventful day when part of Company CC was lined up in front of a section of Company DD, that Dawson was placed squarely in front of the big brawny, heavy-chested Bailey, the DD Company

bully. But whether this was accident or intention it was evident from the start that both men appreciated the situation. For a long time Bailey had had it in for Dawson because of the incident of the "wurra-wurra essence" and he was just honing for a chance to square the account.

And as for the Nebraskan, he had always assured Danny that, given the opportunity, he intended to trim Bailey so thoroughly that he would no longer be the swaggering disagreeable bully of DD Company, whom all the men cordially disliked.

It is likely, too, that the captain of Company DD was interested in the situation, for he realized more than any one else that Bailey was a disturbing element in his company and he knew also that only a thoroughly good licking would tame him down. That is probably the reason why he called his two First Lieutenants to his side as the word was given for the practice to commence, and sauntered away with them, to a secluded portion of the training grounds. Evidently he did not purpose interfering with whatever took place thereafter.

Both the DD and CC Company men realized that something unusual was about to occur, for each knew the feeling between the men and that is probably why they all put such little spirit in

their own boxing and stole surreptitious glances at the two big fellows.

"Right lead and counter first. Ready! Go!" snapped the drill master, a former instructor in boxing at a fashionable New York club.

Bailey led with his right according to rules, and Dawson ducked, but the counter he let go with his left, had real steam behind it. It flashed up under Bailey's arm and caught him on the chin with a jolt that snapped his head backward. Bailey's face grew red, and his expression sullen and menacing while the muscles in his heavy neck stood out like pieces of rope.

"You're after a beatin', are you, Dawson? Well I'll give it to yuh," he snarled as he whipped over an upper-cut, that, had it found its mark, would have laid Dawson on the ground. But the calm and wily Nebraskan swayed backward ever so slightly and the glove hissed past his face harmlessly.

Every one heard Bailey's remark and all practice stopped. Then when the infantrymen saw that the officers had conveniently disappeared and that there was no one about in authority save the boxing master, they eased up in their positions and watched what was about to happen. Even the boxing instructor, accustomed as he was to glove encounters, sensed something interesting and forgot his work of instructing for the present.

It was a vicious fight while it lasted. Strength and brawn and cunning pitted against each other, backed on one side by a grudge, and on the other by the will of a Dawson who knew that only absolute defeat of the bully could make a different man of him.

Both were in deadly earnest, and being practiced boxers, took no chances. With the agility of two panthers they slipped here and there sparring constantly, and feeling out each other's weak spots. And now and then at the slightest chance of an opening they would rip out with a blow that had telling force behind it.

Bailey was the first to close in for really serious work. Dawson snapped over a straight left, meant for the bully's face. Bailey moved his head aside ever so slightly and the glove shot over his shoulder. Then at the same instant he hooked in a sizzling left, that Dawson could not block. The glove caught him squarely on the point of the chin and dazed him. Like a cat he plunged forward into a clinch, and wrapping his long arms about Bailey, dropped his head on the bully's shoulder, where he rested until his brain cleared from the jar of the blow. And Bailey, meanwhile, eager to follow up his advantage, tried to throw the heavy Dawson off.

In a matter of seconds, however, the Nebraskan was himself again, and leaping backward he

hurled the heavy Bailey away from him and was on his guard again before the bully could bring his fist into action once more. It was a neat piece of ring strategy and brought forth a murmur of applause from DD and CC Company men.

That blow had stung Dawson into quicker action even though it had jarred his intelligence for an instant. He was the one to charge this time, and with a feint at the head with his left he cut loose a body blow that brought a grunt from Bailey. They were hard at it after that, mixing it up in a perfect whirlwind of blows and counters, and the grunts and snarls that emanated from the now thoroughly ugly Bailey were those of an infuriated animal.

Suddenly out of the mêlée of flying arms, one distinct blow was registered on the brains of the onlookers. They saw Dawson lean forward ever so slightly and his left arm shoot out piston fashion, heard a muffled blow, and the next instant, Bailey clutching the air and groping for something to support him, staggered backward and fell, rolled over on his face and lay still for a period of two seconds.

The boxing instructor, instinct prompting him, jumped forward and began to count. Bailey, raising his big hulk to his knees drew himself up, shook his heavy head to clear his whirling brain,

and at the stroke of nine came to his feet again, on guard and ready for the rush of Dawson.

But that blow made a distinct impression on Bailey, for the bully was not himself after that for several seconds. He was groggy, and a little uncertain and instead of meeting Dawson's rush with a counter attack he covered up and stalled until he found an opportunity to fall into a clinch.

It was Dawson now who struggled to throw off the heavy Bailey so that he could finish the fight. But Bailey was as good in a clinch as the Nebraskan and clung on in spite of Dawson. Indeed he held on so long that the boxing instructor, a self-appointed referee, stepped forward and pulled them apart, interposing his body between the two men until both could get a fresh start.

Dawson, however, did not waste time. The instant the instructor stepped aside he waded into Bailey, and the bully, more himself again, blocked and countered swiftly and accurately. Again and again they clashed and first it was Dawson who reeled backward under a stinging blow, and then it was the DD Company man. But each time they closed and went at it again.

Then once more, there seemed to come that lull for an instant, and Dawson's left shot out like a battering ram. Bailey tried frantically to duck,

but his judgment was poor and he put his chin directly in line with the on-coming boxing glove.

The fight ended the next instant. There was the smack of flesh and glove coming together. Bailey reeled and staggered uncertainly, then fell in a crumpled heap flat on his face, and remained in that position to be counted out.

What a shout went up from both DD and CC Company men when it was evident that Dawson was the victor! All discipline forgotten for the moment, they crowded about the big Nebraskan and congratulated him enthusiastically.

"Bailey sure got his," said one DD Company man, "and we're all glad to see it."

"I'm a-thinkin' that t'spalpeen 'll not want fer t' fight again in a hurry," said another.

But Dawson paid little attention to the congratulations. He still had his eyes on Bailey, who was having a hard struggle to regain consciousness. And finally when the prostrated man began to open his eyes the Nebraskan strode over to him, and assisting him to his feet, held him still until his head cleared.

And the first words the bully said when he could speak again were,

"Dawson, you have one awful kick in that left paw of yours and it gave me a terrible lacin'. You can box a bit too, my boy," and he reached

out an unsteady hand and grasped the one that was offered by Dawson.

Then both of them were dismissed for further boxing practice while the rest of the men returned to their work of exchanging blow for blow and learning new leads and counters.

CHAPTER V.

OFF TO FRANCE.

That encounter between Dawson and Bailey accomplished a great deal. It did more for both men, and more for the men of CC and DD Company than any of them realized.

Dawson was looked upon by the men of both companies as a real hero, for he had fairly beaten the biggest bully in camp. He had moreover showed that he was a master at boxing, and this besides making him popular among the fellows of the two companies made an impression on the boxing instructor as well. In fact, the instructor, in private, recounted the fight to Captain Ragan, and assured that officer that he had a good man in Cross Dawson of the Fifth Squad, and if it were possible, he (the boxing instructor) would like to have Dawson as an assistant.

But the Captain had other ideas about the matter and he did not say yes or no to the instructor's request. He merely assured him that he would think the matter over.

In the meantime, changes were taking place in

the regiment and in particular in Company CC. One of the second lieutenants of which there are four to the enlarged infantry company of to-day, became quite ill and received his discharge, and Sergeant Gorham, was moved up and given his commission. Then in the changes that followed Corporal Hughes of the squad to which Danny belonged received a warrant as Sergeant, leaving the squad lacking a corporal.

This was exactly the opportunity Captain Ragan wanted for he too had been watching Dawson, and in a few days the big Nebraskan was made the corporal of the Wurra-Wurra Squad, much to the satisfaction of Danny, Mickey O'Connor and the rest of that group of congenial guardsmen. Then as a final tribute to his qualities as a good soldier and a good boxer, Corporal Dawson was made boxing instructor for Company CC, and the professional instructor was relieved of this detail work and given other and more important work in the nature of supervising the boxing efforts of almost the entire battalion.

As for Bailey, of Company DD, that fight had made a changed man of him as Dawson had predicted. Of course, the change was not instantaneous, nor was it perceptible to the men of his company, for they, naturally disliking him for his former aggressiveness, were very prejudiced and

not entirely willing to give him a chance to redeem himself.

The change was apparent to Danny Kelly first of all. The evening after the glove encounter between the two men, as Danny was crossing the end of DD Company's street he encountered Bailey, who grinned at him sheepishly in spite of a black eye and a badly bruised face.

"Hello, Danny," he said almost good naturedly, and Danny was so astounded to hear him speak in that tone that he stopped still in his tracks.

"What's t' matter, Danny, don't you recognize me with me facial decorations? That man Dawson's a wonder at changin' complexions. First it's his wurra-wurra medicine and then it's his fists," said Bailey.

"Why, I recognized your face all right," grinned Danny, "but not your attitude."

Bailey looked very serious.

"Well, Danny, I think I've changed a little. I've found out it's not right to go around with a grouch on all t' time. You don't have half as much fun as you do when you are pleasant once in a while."

"By George, you're right, old man," said Danny eagerly. "You'll have a lot more fun if you try to make friends instead of enemies."

"That's true," said Bailey, "an' I guess I've made too many enemies in DD Company already.

Why every man o' them is down on me. An' I don't blame 'em. Still if they'd give me a chance I'd show 'em I can be decent."

Danny was too surprised for words. This from the Company bully. He could hardly believe it. He pondered the matter for a moment, and then suddenly there flashed through his brain a brand new idea.

"Say, Bailey, just sit tight where you are and don't get grouchy again, and maybe I can help out a little," he said with assurance, and then with a parting nod he hurried away to find his chum Corporal Dawson.

The new corporal, not yet possessed of his stripes, but in a happy mood nevertheless, welcomed Danny with a brotherly slap on the back that almost shook the pitcher's head off, when he heard what Danny had to say.

"Right-o, Danny, Bailey might be a rough neck and he has been sort of a pesky critter around the camp up to now. But I knew a good trimming would fix him all right. And it has. Of course, the fellows in DD Company don't like him and won't play square with him, but if we got him over here we might make a fine sort of a chap of him as far as such fellows go. He has grit, and a fine strong body; and he's some fighter, take it from me. And they are the kind of fellows we want. We could keep an eye on him and if he

get's grouchy again why we'll serve him the same as we did before. But I think he has taken a tumble and realized that he can have a lot more fun being decent than by wanting to fight all the time. I'll see Captain Ragan as soon as I can."

And the upshot of it all was that, in spite of the difficulties that such things usually bring about, Bailey was transferred from DD Company to Company CC and became a member of the Wurra-Wurra Squad under Corporal Dawson. You see, there was a vacancy in the squad caused by Dawson's promotion to Corporal and the moving up of Corporal Hughes, and Danny felt that if the unpopular man in DD Company were transferred to CC Company where the fellows would give him a chance to make good, Bailey would soon develop into a really likeable fellow. And such proved to be the case, for in a short time Bailey became a good and loyal friend of every member of the squad and a very likeable fellow. But more especially was he loyal to Danny and the Corporal and there was little he would not do for them.

Meanwhile the Summer wore on apace, with the daily grind of training growing steadily more strenuous, but the men were growing stronger in body too, and capable of standing up under the hardest physical strains. Indeed they were all growing to be young giants with bulging mus-

cles, and fine clean limbs, and not an ounce of fat or flesh that did not count. They were developing into the best trained body of athletes the country had ever seen. They were all in the pink of condition; 27,000 young fellows, with the strength and staying power of lumber jacks and the clean, quick thinking brains of college athletes.

And of course as time wore on and the men found themselves rounding into fighting trim they began to get restive. What they wanted now was a chance to show why they possessed such fine strong bodies. They wanted to match their muscles and wits with the Boches; they were eager for the time to come when they would disembark "over there" and start for the first line trenches. But little did they realize that the grind of training they were undergoing then was just preliminary and that there would be many more weeks of even harder work before they would be qualified as real fighters. However, it was best that they did not know it, for this chafing to be "up and at 'em" was the thing that was keeping them all on edge and working their hardest to be ready when the time came.

Rumors flew thick and fast as to the time set for their departure for Europe. Some one would whisper that they were to break camp the following week, and set sail. But the following week

always came without a single order of that nature being issued. Then visitors to the camp would bring word that a whole fleet of transports lay waiting in the lower harbor, and speculation was rife as to whether these transports were meant for their division or not.

"Aw, sur-r-e," said Mickey O'Connor, disgustedly, to Danny after he had been telling him the latest rumor, "'tis this an' thot an' t'other thing until yuh can't belave a wor-rd o' it. Nary a man knows what he's talkin' of, Danny, and I won't be sur-re we're goin' over at all till I see me self on t' briney; an' thin begorra I'll not belave it either fer if I did a submar-rane would snake up an' prove I was a liar."

"Aw, you are not optimistic," said Danny; "I believe we'll go any minute and I'll not be sorry when the time comes."

"Sor-rah, is it? Sur-re, Danny, t' day we goes ye see ivery man in t' outfit will do a jig fer joy."

"Well I'll tell you this. I think when the time comes we will not know very much about it until the last minute, then there will be a hurry and scurry and a rush, and first thing we know we'll be on board ship," said Danny.

"Yes an t' next thing after that we'll know is thot we're all so sea-sick we won't be able t' kape anythin' on our stomichs but our hands," said Mickey with a grimace.

Danny was nearly right in his conjecture.

The regular routine of long hikes, drills, football, cane rushes, baseball and setting up exercises maintained in almost monotonous fashion every day for weeks and weeks, save on Wednesdays and Saturdays when the camp swarmed with visitors, and Danny and the rest of the company baseball team had an opportunity to have some real fun outside of the line of regular drill work, and big reviews in which the regiment participated.

And then, one evening after mess when Dawson, Danny and Mickey O'Connor and Bailey, whom the members of the Wurra-Wurra Squad had begun to call Big Bill, were talking over the prospects of organizing a series of games between the various units in the division for the divisional baseball championship, came rumors so convincing that embarking time was close at hand, that every one was electrified.

Danny and Dawson both recalled very suddenly that they had noted unusual activities among the men of certain sections of the division, along with the constant appearance and disappearance of heavy motor trucks on the roads that lead out of the camp, that they felt certain the rumors had good grounds for existence this time.

They did not have to speculate long, for on

the heels of the whispered rumor, secret orders began to trickle down the line from the officers' tents to the privates.

"They were to move in two hours," was the startling announcement.

"Who will move?" asked Danny of Corporal Dawson.

"Search me," said Dawson crisply. "All I know is that we will move. That may mean the company, the regiment or the entire division. I don't know." And it was weeks before any of them did know how large a part of the division did move.

All that they could glean from authoritative sources was that their company would leave camp in two hours, entrain for some mysterious point and after that what was going to happen to them was entirely a closed book to every one save of course the officers high up in command, and they were Sphinx-like in the silence they maintained.

Anyway it was good to know that something was about to happen, and eagerly Danny, Mickey, Big Bill, and the rest of the squad dived into their tents and began rolling up their blankets and packing their kit bags and other outfits. In half an hour they were ready, in heavy marching orders, awaiting the command to move.

Dusk came on and still the boys in khaki waited beside their tents wondering what was

about to happen and hoping for the best luck possible, which of course would be to find themselves aboard transports in the morning.

An hour passed, and still another and the men waited. Then through the darkness came the command for the company to form in the long street between the now vacant tents, which had been left standing. And above the scuffle of feet, Danny could hear the noise made by companies to the right and left forming also. It was evident that a big portion of the regiment was leaving with them.

Short commands from the company street in front of them told the boys of Company CC that the section to their left was leaving and presently the commands of their own officers, caused them to break into squads, and move forward, on into the night.

For a time all Danny could see through the darkness was a long, long line of phantom-like soldiers swinging on through the darkness. There was no noise save the tramp, tramp, tramp of thousands of feet on the hard clay road, and there was no talking save now and then a whisper among the men. Danny wondered why everything was being done so silently until he stopped to reason it out.

Evidently the movement of the troops was being kept a strict secret so as to deceive spies of

any kind who may have been watching the camp. With the troops departing under cover of darkness, and the tents left standing it might be days before any one would discover that portions of the camp were deserted, and by that time they would be well on their way to their destination wherever that might be.

On they tramped through the silent night, like a great serpent moving down the roadway. But presently a halt was called and Danny discovered that they were beside the railroad tracks again. Before him loomed long lines of cars, with shades drawn over every window so that no light could show through.

For a time the troops stood at ease along the railroad embankment waiting for the command to entrain. Then it came and silently the men began to climb up onto the platform of the cars and pass on inside.

Swiftly, but with little noise the cars were filled, and as each train was loaded with its human freight, it pulled out and began rolling onward, whither the occupants did not know.

For nearly two hours the trains rumbled over bridges, across switches, through railroad yards, past houses, through villages, on, on, never stopping. Evidently the railroad had been cleared of all traffic to permit the troop trains to move unhampered.

Then, just as the journey was beginning to get tiresome to the boys in khaki, and some of them had curled up in the wicker seats to try to steal a few winks of sleep, came the first interruption in their journey. With the crunching of brakes and the sigh of air, the long train slowed up and came to a full stop. And a moment later came the command to detrain and fall in beside the railroad tracks.

All was darkness outside, save here and there a red or green switchlight twinkling through the night telling the soldiers plainly that they were detraining in a railroad yard of no small proportions. Everywhere there were cars, the windows darkened by curtains as were those of the troop train Danny's company traveled in. And along the railroad track stretching to what seemed an interminable distance, were lines of ghostlike soldiers, looming up in the darkness.

"Forward Ho," came the command from the darkness ahead and presently the hollow tramp of many feet sounded through the night, and the troops began to leave the railroad yards. Out onto the paved, but darkened street they marched, the houses on either side staring at them with blank windows like sightless eyes. Only a stray dog or two was abroad to welcome them or wish them Godspeed, for the town slumbered softly, the hour being after midnight.

Danny and Mickey and Corporal Dawson tried to guess where they were, but none of them recognized the streets through which they passed. Danny had a vague idea that it might be a downtown section of Brooklyn, but it might just as well be a portion of San Francisco for all he identified in the way of familiar landmarks.

On they tramped through silent streets. Now and then they swung past gaping civilians, who were abroad quite late, and occasionally a lonesome policeman stood on the curb and watched the swinging line of infantrymen move by.

Soon Danny began to catch the smell of salt air, and he knew they were approaching the water front. Then warehouses and shipping establishments took the place of dwellings along the street line, and soon the far off hoot of a passing steamboat was heard above the tramp of feet.

In a few minutes, lights twinkled ahead and the boys of Company CC saw the structures of several docks looming up, and beyond them the sullen gray rolling water of a harbor. And at the docks were moored four huge ocean liners, the transports that were to carry them "over there."

Every heart beat fast when this was revealed, for now it was determined beyond the shadow of a doubt that they were to embark and sail away. Indeed the ranks of men would have burst forth

into a mighty cheer had they not been instructed to be as silent as possible.

Embarking was not accomplished with the speed that had attended the entraining, and Company CC was left standing in the streets beside the wharf for a long time. This, however, gave Danny plenty of opportunity to look about. What interested him mostly, however, were the anchor lights of huge gray hulls riding far out beyond the pierhead line. He guessed that those shapes were the battleships and destroyers that were to form their convoy, and later developments proved his guess to be correct.

It was past two o'clock in the morning, by Danny's luminous wrist watch which he had adopted following the example of most of the men in his company, when word came for them to go forward. At trail arms, they moved to the entrance of one of the piers, and then at route step, they walked through the shedded structure to a point where a broad gang plank reached in toward them. Up this they hurried to find themselves on the already crowded decks of a big ocean liner.

Another long wait ensued before the gang plank was finally hauled aboard and commands were given to cast off. Then slowly, with tugs pulling and hauling and puffing huskily, at bow and stern, the big gray painted transport slipped slowly from the dock, out into the swirling tide.

Bells jangled in the nethermost portions of the big steel hull and the propellers began to churn. Then slowly, head down stream, she moved forward, and the harbor line began to drop behind.

The Wurra-wurra Squad, with a group of other fellows, stood in the stern and watched the departure. The first rays of dawn were taking the place of the heavy black blanket of night now, and in the east, rose streaks began to paint the sky heralding the coming of the sun. Morning was just breaking, and somehow things seemed hushed and quiet, as if the whole world were sad and lonesome with the departure of that boatload of healthy young fellows: The sadness seemed to grip all on board too, for the moment, for every one seemed quiet. Then Mickey O'Connor, his Irish sentiment welling up within him, said softly, as he blew a kiss astern:

"Good-bye, old U. S. A. Sur-re it's Ireland was me mither, but you're me swateheart now, and it's you I'll come back to if come back I can."

Then some one produced a mouth organ and began playing softly a farewell song.

A lump seemed to gather in Danny's throat just about that time, and he felt a tightening about his heart that made him feel very unhappy. He wished that he had had time enough to say a final good-bye to his mother and father at least.

CHAPTER VI.

SUBMARINES OFF THE STARBOARD BOW.

The steamship S————, which had been a popular vessel of a certain well-known trans-Atlantic steamship line in peace times, plying between New York and certain German ports, had been almost rebuilt so far as interior arrangement was concerned when it was converted into a troop ship for Uncle Sam. Had Danny and the rest of his chums in Company CC known the vessel in the days before the war they would scarcely have recognized it as it was when they inspected it.

The palatial fitting of the first and second cabin quarters had been ruthlessly ripped out, and space made to accommodate scores and scores of men more than the vessel would carry under ordinary circumstances. Partitions and decorations were torn away in the dining-rooms too, and long mess halls with plain board tables and plain benches for chairs were used in the place of the mahogany and plush furniture that had adorned the same quarters in peace times. But all this change was necessary, for the S————,

now carried some five thousand passengers where in peace times she only accommodated three thousand under most crowded conditions.

But she was a fine vessel with all the alterations that had taken place, and the two smoke stacks, rising out of the mass of gray painted superstructure above the deck line, gave Danny and his friends the impression, that if it were necessary, the vessel could travel at a mighty swift pace. And when Danny made this mental conjecture he little dreamed of how very fast the huge vessel would have to travel ere her journey was ended.

The men of Company CC had an opportunity to give the vessel a superficial inspection only, as soon the mess call for breakfast was sounded, and after an all night journey the men felt that a good meal and later on a good sleep would do them no harm at all.

Breakfast in the big mess hall proved to be an interesting affair with hundreds of men crowded about the long tables serving themselves out of the huge pans and platters of food that were brought in from the galley and passed from man to man down the tables. Every one was liberal in the portions he gave himself, for all had well developed appetites.

The sun was up, and land was little more than a gray blue streak on the horizon astern when

Danny, Corporal Dawson and the rest of the members of the Wurra-wurra Squad came on deck. But although there was no land in sight there were many interesting things to be seen from the decks of the vessel. Astern, and trailing along in the wake of the transport were two other vessels equally as large, and each gray painted from waterline to truck, and ahead was still another leading the way, with a very formidable and serious looking battleship on either side and scurrying destroyers scouting up and down the line.

Exactly in which direction they were headed Danny did not know. He could only guess that they were working toward the northeast, and far off on the horizon line, hulls down, but with volumes of black smoke reaching skyward, he could see many other ships, all apparently clustered about in one position.

The guardsmen were mystified at this for a time, but it soon developed that the point at which the vessels were lying-to was a rendezvous. Evidently transports from a dozen different harbors up and down the coast were gathering there by appointment, and when they had all collected they would start across the Atlantic in one huge fleet.

Along about noontime the line of four transports, of which the S———— was one, came up

with the huge fleet of steamships at the rendezvous. Danny counted fifteen troop ships all gathered together, while on the outside of the group steamed a half dozen big gray sullen looking battleships and scores of swift destroyers, all cruising about and looking for all the world like huge mother gulls protecting a brood of young ones.

Then ensued a wait of several hours while the big troop ships lay to, the destroyers scuttling about among the vessels of the fleet, always guarding against trouble.

Danny and Mickey were leaning over the rail debating the question of whether they should turn in now and catch up on some much needed sleep, or whether they should wait and watch the big fleet get under way when a destroyer drew alongside and stopped for a moment while its commander hallooed through a megaphone to an officer on board the S————.

A hail from the deck of the destroyer below interrupted their conversation.

"Hey, Danny. Oh, you Dan Kelly," sounded a voice Danny knew, and looking down he beheld the grinning countenance of Les Stewart of the Sphinx Club wearing the uniform of a bluejacket.

"Hello, Les!" shouted Danny enthusiastically, "What are you doing here?"

"Almost the same thing you are, only I'm in the Navy. Joined the Naval Militia a few days after the meeting, last Spring. Remember?"

"Sure I remember," said Danny. Then he added, "Bully for you. Great stuff. What ship is that you are on?"

"The *Pixie*. Seven of us were assigned to her. It's great stuff. We've licked one sub already."

"Fine! That's what I call luck. Say what did the other fellows do?"

"Oh, they all enlisted. Ray Barnes is in the artillery, you know. Buck joined the cavalry, Bud Grant enlisted in the Signal Corps. He's down at Spartanburg and Hobby Austen and Hopper Gordon are with the Sphinx Ambulance, and when I heard of them last, about three months ago, they were ready to sail for France with their hospital unit. Guess they beat us all in getting into action."

Further conversation was interrupted then because the *Pixie* got under way once more. With shouts of "Good-bye, Dan, so long, Les, and wish you luck" the destroyer pulled away and rushed off for further scout work among the vessels of the fleet.

Four bells sounded from the vessels of the big fleet when signal flags burst forth from one of the battleships, which had taken its position well

in front of the fleet. Then engine room bells were sounded, a volley of orders bawled out through megaphones, and presently transport after transport swung into line and the big fleet was under way. Danny and Mickey and scores of other guardsmen watched it all with eager interest, but when the long lines of ships were formed, and the convoy of battleships and destroyers had come up into position, heavy-eyed Mickey and Danny along with Dawson, Bailey and the rest, concluded they had had enough sight-seeing and were ready for a spell "bethune t' blankets" as Mickey put it.

Life on board the transport was apt to get monotonous to the guardsmen, for aside from setting up exercises and other physical drills and lectures from the officers, there was little else to do, which was a change from the rigorous training at camp which they had just left. There were, however, some things that the guardsmen could do by way of catching up on things that had been more or less neglected in the hurry and scurry of the last week. One of these things was washing. Some of the men seized the opportunity to wash their entire outfit thoroughly, including underclothes, socks, shirts, handkerchiefs and even summer uniforms. Daily, dozens of infantrymen were to be found at the long tables in the waste of the ship, lathering their clothes with frothy yellow soap and scouring their

garments with scrubbing brushes and frequent rinsings.

By way of diversions, there were boxing bouts on deck. Almost daily, a big ring of spectators would form and then several of the best boxers in the outfit would be pitted against each other in matches that always produced no end of fun and amusement.

Fortunately for Danny and many others who could be classed as "land lubbers," the weather was comparatively calm, and there were not many cases of sea-sickness. Only once did Danny feel at all indisposed, but the nausea passed away quickly and he felt very much better after staying away from mess during a mid-day meal. There were some, however, who did become really sick and who to quote Mickey could "kape nothin' on their stomicks but their hands."

And so the voyage wore on, the ships drawing daily nearer that danger zone that Germany had proclaimed forbidden water. The guardsmen knew when they were well into that section of the ocean for reveille was sounded before daylight that morning, and the men were instructed to secure their life belts and buckle them on. Then to guard against all possible dangers, a life boat drill was called before mess time, and another immediately after mess, so that the men would know exactly where they belonged should their

ship be torpedoed. Also many ropes were hung over the sides so that if the ship went under suddenly the men could slide down these life lines and take to the water.

The three-inch guns fore and aft were unjacketed too, and gun crews held their stations hour after hour, while the lookouts aloft scanned the water about the ship. And on every other vessel of the big fleet men were doing exactly the same thing, while the battleships became more active and the destroyers raced about and circled the vessels in approved watchdog fashion.

But hour after hour wore on without the least indication of any signs of danger. The sea beneath and the heavens above looked as peaceful as possible, and it seemed ridiculous to think that danger lurked anywhere in the vicinity.

At eight bells, just as mess call was sounding, the wireless on the transport began to crackle and snap, and soon word was passed about that a convoy of destroyers sent out from British and French ports had been located a hundred miles to the east, and the boats were headed toward the fleet to afford additional protection for the transports. All this was very thrilling to Danny who had made up his mind that he would be on deck when the destroyers hove in sight. But a hundred miles is no short distance to travel even for swiftly sailing destroyers, and hour after hour

during the afternoon, Danny and many others all wearing life belts, remained on deck, watching and waiting.

But now and then the waiting was interrupted by messages from the wireless room, that the flotilla was fast approaching, and twice came the news that submarines were in the vicinity and that a double watch should be kept. But the guardsmen only smiled when this news trickled down to them from officers to men and so on through the ship. They refused to be the slightest bit alarmed. Indeed, to them danger from submarines had already become a joke, and not worth being very much startled about.

The afternoon passed and evening mess time was approaching, and Danny and his companions had begun to believe that nothing very interesting or exciting was going to happen. And then suddenly, when they least expected it things broke loose in whirlwind fashion.

Leaning over the port rail, Danny and Mickey and Big Bill Bailey were chatting away about something of little consequence, while Dawson and another man stood nearby, when suddenly four hundred yards off and ahead of the transport something big and heavy rolled to the surface with a sigh of air and a wash of water that sounded quite distinctly above everything else. At the same time, not far off two black tubes

CHAP. VI—The third discharge was a direct hit.

broke the surface of the water in one place, farther astern two more appeared and still beyond and directly in line with another transport another tube appeared. Indeed the ocean seemed to almost bristle with them, there were so many.

Instantly the alarm was raised throughout the fleet, and on the moment Danny spotted a string of white bubbles rising from the submarine that had come all the way to the surface and heading straight toward the transport he was on. The U-boat had fired a torpedo.

But the always alert pilots of the big vessel had seen the submarine before Danny had, and almost the instant the torpedo was fired the big boat turned swiftly and headed straight toward the rolling hull of the under-water monster, bent on ramming it. At the same time the big bow gun came into action and the whole ship shook with her first shot.

That quick move saved the transport from immediate destruction for in turning, the submarine's target was spoiled, and the torpedo went racing by in the wake of the big vessel, missing the stern by an extremely uncomfortable margin.

Things moved with a rush after that. Ahead leapt the transport bent on crushing the dripping steel monster under its sharp prow, while the gun crew in the bow worked swiftly firing shot after shot. The third discharge was a direct hit,

for Danny and the rest of the men saw a cloud of water rise just beside the U-boat, and an instant later the cumbersome thing up-ended, showed a gaping rent in her dripping steel sides for a moment and then with a sigh of air and a loud gurgle sank beneath the waves, while the transport, rushing head-on and at top speed, plunged over the spot where the U-boat had been, crushing what was left of the helpless cylinder of steel before it sank entirely, while a loud and enthusiastic cheer went up from the men in khaki who lined the rails.

But with this encounter ended, there was a lot more excitement to claim the attention of the guardsmen. Six submarines were in an attack on the fleet and the destroyers were having their hands full with the five that remained after the sinking of the luckless one by the transport S————. Guns were roaring in every direction and projectiles spattered up the water like tremendous hail-stones, while the swift moving destroyers and patrol boats darted here and there among the bristling periscopes.

One periscope was hit. Danny saw it shattered by a shell. And others had some perilously close calls before they all vanished with the same suddenness that had marked their appearance.

The attack had been frustrated, but the destroyers were not finished with the submarines

by any means. Wherever a disturbance on the surface of the water showed that a U-boat had gone down a great depth, bombs were hurled overboard. These sank immediately and a moment later, with a dull rumble a column of water shot aloft showing where they had exploded. Whether any of these bombs destroyed a submarine was of course hard to tell, but they were so powerful, that if they were dropped within a reasonable distance of one of the underwater craft, the force of the explosion was bound to do some damage, if only denting in the steel sides of the U-boats and putting them out of action at least temporarily.

It had all happened so quickly, and was over so swiftly, that Danny and the rest could hardly believe they had witnessed the battle, and thanks to quick action of the destroyers and the fine work of the men on board the S————, not a transport had been hit or damaged in the slightest way.

"Well, I think luck is with us now, me lads," said Mickey O'Connor. "Sure 'twas a clost shave we had, but t' razor nivver slip-pt and we can go on shmilin' just t' same."

"Yes, but it's as close as I ever want to come to being overboard. If that old torpedo hadn't missed we would all be paddling our little canoes right now," said Dawson.

"Right, and I think we'd best not say too much

for there's plenty of ocean bechune here an' France fer t' git wet in," spoke Mickey again.

"Hello," cried Danny, at this point, "what's coming here?" He was pointing to a low hanging cloud of black smoke on the horizon. Then he answered his own question by adding:

"That's the fleet of French and British destroyers come up to meet us, I'll bet."

"Yes, and they are coming all bent on making time too, from the looks of the smoke."

"They must have heard our guns, but they are a little late for the scrap," said Big Bill Bailey.

The smoke cloud approached very swiftly and soon revealed a flying line of knife-like destroyers under full headway. They were making tremendous speed and the water leapt away from the sharp prows of the pugnacious looking craft in a way that showed that they were eager to catch up with trouble of any kind.

Thunderous cheers went up from the fleet of transports and the convoy, when the allied vessels swung about and joined the fleets, and whistles and sirens tooted an enthusiastic greeting, for it was a fine business-like looking fleet of boats that had been sent out to assist in the protection of the men in khaki.

"Sure, I'll bet they're hoppin' mad they didn't get here in time for the rumpus, for I know they'd just like to cut loose at a bunch of Boche sub-

marines. They look t' part," said Mickey. And they certainly did.

The coming of the extra convoy made the men on the transport feel certain that their journey was drawing near an end, and most of them spent that evening getting their things together so that they would be ready to disembark immediately upon landing. Every man rolled up in his blanket that night with a feeling that the morrow would bring him very much nearer to the sound of guns and the flash and clash of battle—"over there."

CHAPTER VII.

THE AIR RAIDERS.

Danny was awakened next morning by the sound of military bands, the ringing cheers of thousands of people and the boom of salute guns. Eagerly he hurried to the nearest port hole to look out and what he saw filled him with pride and enthusiasm. That they were "Somewhere in France" could not be doubted, for all about streamed the tri-colors of the French Republic and the starry flag of the United States, while joy-maddened mobs of women and children and old men swarmed everywhere, on piers, in boats and even on roof tops. It was a wonderful reception they were giving the boys in khaki, and Danny was proud indeed to be wearing the olive drab uniform and being a part of the whole wonderful demonstration.

The transport S———— had just come to anchor in the fairway when Danny arrived on deck, and others were still coming through the entrance of the almost land-locked harbor. With the appearance of every vessel, more guns boomed and more cheers were raised until it seemed as

if the very skies shook with the vibration. Danny wondered whether the first of the United States troops that had landed months before could have received a more enthusiastic greeting than they were getting.

The warmth of the welcome from the people on shore and on the vessels in the harbor made the boys in khaki proceed about their preparations for landing with snap and vigor. Kits and rifles were gathered together in short order, and ere long, line upon line of soldiers in heavy marching order were on the decks ready to disembark the moment the big transport was warped into one of the long basins between the piers. This was accomplished speedily with the aid of a number of puffing tugs and before the morning was well advanced thousands of fighting nephews of Uncle Sam were streaming down upon the docks at which the big fleet of vessels had been made fast. And then what a rousing greeting these boys received when regiment after regiment formed along the harbor front ready to move at command.

But that command was slow in coming. Indeed it could scarcely be expected that the men could be disembarked and moved immediately. There were thousands of things to be attended to, and the supply divisions, and the transportation men were working like beavers to get things

ready for a quick departure. Hundreds of motor trucks, all Uncle Sam's property that had come from somewhere in France, were waiting to be loaded, and the scene about the harbor front was one of hustling and perspiring men in uniform working as they never worked before.

Order and system reigned however in spite of the apparent chaos, and it was not long before motor trucks began to move away from the piers bearing a nondescript load of supplies, equipment and what not. Big details of infantrymen were sent out to assist in the work of loading and unloading the things that were immediately necessary, and you may be sure that Danny, Dawson and his squad were in the thick of it all. In truth almost the entire Company was busy at some form of hard work. But this chance to stretch muscles and limber up again was welcome after the tedious twelve days of confinement on shipboard, and the men bent to their tasks with a will. Then, you see the harder they worked the sooner they would start for that longed for point somewhere just behind the battle line where they could hear the rumble of the big guns and feel that it would not be long before they would be in action too.

They worked hard, and they worked with a will and here and there bursts of song punctuated the steady stream of shouts and cries and sharp

orders that were being bawled out in French and English. And the songs the boys in khaki sang, ranged from *Swanee River* and *Hail Columbia* to *Good-bye Broadway* and *Over There.* It was a wonderful and inspiring sight for every one to witness, including the natives who had doubtless seen thousands of other American troops disembark the same way earlier in the year.

It was well along in the afternoon before military bands began to play again and the khaki clad lines began to form. Soon the Fighting Fifth was at attention and ere long the command to move forward was given and Danny and his friends found themselves swinging through the queer looking streets of the crowded and quaint looking French seaport of M————.

All along the line of march, enthusiastic French men and women lined the streets, crowding far out beyond the curb line (where one existed) to greet the soldiers of the big western Republic. Indeed the crowds reached to the very new and very American looking railroad yards at the far end of the city, which Danny learned had been for the greater part reconstructed by American engineers for the movement of American soldiers. And the assortment of rolling stock that Danny beheld on the tracks in the yard made him marvel. There were newly-built freight cars of the American type, and squeezed up and tiny looking

French cars all labled "40 Homme" or "50 Homme" according to their man-carrying capacity.

Entraining was not such a difficult task as it at first appeared, nor did it take so long. In spite of the crowds and in spite of the thousands of soldiers lining the tracks, train after train was filled in orderly fashion, coaches, freight cars, box cars and flat cars being used indiscriminately. Fortunately the Wurra-wurra Squad and in fact a large part of Company CC were allotted a broad flat car for their vehicle, and this, while it may not have been satisfactory in stormy weather, served the young infantrymen wonderfully well, for they had plenty of fresh air and sunshine, and room to stretch their legs. Packs and equipment were piled in the center of the car and then the men sprawled out as they pleased, Danny, Dawson and Mickey choosing perilous seats on the sides of the car where they could let their legs dangle over comfortably.

Soon the train got under way amid the cheers of civilians and soldiers, and then Danny and the rest produced water bottles and extra rations served to them on board the steamer and began to consume their noonday meal now about three hours late. Nibbling biscuits, dried beef and marmalade and washing it all down with occasional swigs from their water bottles, they set

forth on what promised to be a pleasant journey through France.

Mile after mile of pretty French country rolled by. Tiny farms seemed crowded together, fenced off and hedged about with the utmost precision and neatness. Mountains were scarce, but the scenery was backed up by long undulating slopes, that showed alternately green and brown or dull gray. Sheep were seen frequently, and so were goats and occasionally cows. Villages crowded so close upon each other that scarcely had the train rolled through one of the quaint settlements and gotten entirely clear of it before another was encountered. They were all tiny, however, being, as Danny guessed, farming communities. One thing Danny noted with interest was, that every foot of ground was or had been under cultivation. Nothing was allowed to go to waste and there were no lawn spaces or grounds permitted to lie idle for the sake of beauty.

But sight-seeing grew wearisome, and as night came on the fellows lay back and made themselves comfortable, some even dozing off and snoring loudly as if in opposition to the clankety-clankety-rattle of the slowly moving train. Once, after darkness fell, they rolled through a large city; an industrial center where long brick factories lined the tracks and stretched out everywhere. An arc light glared from every corner,

while open furnaces and spitting smoke stacks sent forth shafts of light that weirdly illuminated the men huddled together on the flat car. From all this, from the economy of the land and the industry of the factories, Danny sub-consciously caught the spirit that prevailed in France behind the battle lines. The Republic was putting into the war everything she possessed, men, money, labor, ground and resources.

Wrapped in his heavy O. D. overcoat, Danny tried to catch a nap with the rest of his companions, but the jerky, rattly, troop train hardly provided comfortable sleeping facilities, and it seemed to the boy from Emerson Hall that he scarcely dozed off before a series of jerks and rattles awakened him again. He envied some of the fellows on the flat car, especially Cross Dawson and Big Bill Bailey, who, curled up like big bears, lay huddled together beside him, snoring valiantly. Danny tried again and again, and finally he did go thoroughly to sleep only to be awakened in less than two hour's time by a most terrific explosion.

It seemed to the half dazed Danny as if he had been catapulted into a world gone mad. Before he was fully awake he found himself in a crowd of shouting, jostling men. He was shouting and running too, but he did not know why. Then another terrific explosion followed and a blinding

flash of light lit up the surrounding country and revealed to him the startled and weirdly whitened faces of hundreds of his companions running up and down the railroad track. What had really happened Danny did not know. He had a vague idea that the railroad train had suddenly run into the very heart of the war zone.

But before he had time to think, far overhead he heard a ripping and tearing sound and looking aloft he could see a stream of fire spitting from an invisible machine gun, which was doubtless mounted on an aeroplane lost in the darkness aloft. At other points in the sky were similar streaks of fire, and now and then a shell burst high in the air and Danny could see the flash and hear the hollow boom.

Parallel to the railroad tracks was a highway, and while Danny was still collecting his scattered senses, sirens began to scream to his left, and a few moments later with motors thundering, three big armor automobiles came rushing by, and on each was mounted an anti-aircraft gun and a searchlight, which shot a long arm of light aloft and searched the night sky for aeroplanes.

It was all clear to Danny now. The troop train had been the object of a German air raid. The Boches had tried to give the boys in khaki a taste of what they were soon to expect, and from the dazed condition of every one about him Danny

guessed that the Germans had almost accomplished their purpose.

The aircraft were still dropping bombs. Now and then Danny heard a terrific explosion, and off in the distance he could see a volume of vivid light shoot skyward. On down the road rushed the three big French automobiles, their searchlights playing and their anti-aircraft guns roaring, while high up in the air pursuit machines, manned by French or American aviators, were chasing the fleeing Boches and making things uncomfortable for them.

Evidently the rest of the men grasped the situation as soon as Danny did, for soon the shouting died down and the men ceased running up and down the tracks. Instead they stood quite still and gazed aloft trying hard to see something of the aerial engagement. While they were standing thus, quick, sharp orders were shouted out by the officers, to the effect that the men should entrain again, and that was the first that Danny realized that he did not know how or when he had gotten off the train. Nor did any of his companions. It was as much a mystery to Dawson, Bailey and excited little Mickey O'Connor.

"How did I get off? Sure I don't know. First I heard was a whale of a big noise, and next I knows I'm runnin' up and down a yellin' an' I don't know what fer. Bedad t' Boches might jist

as well kill a man as scare him t' death," said Mickey when they were all back on the flat car again.

In a few minutes the train was under way again, and then details of the raid began to work down the line. The raid had been made on a nearby city, so some French officers had explained to Captain Ragan, and they had very likely marked the railroad for a few bombs. In all probabilities the Boches never knew how nearly they had come to making a real haul, for their bombs began to drop just as the troop train containing the American soldiers was passing by.

Fortunately their judgment had been slightly off and none of the bombs had come nearer than a hundred yards of the tracks, so no one was injured and none of the railroad property was damaged at all. But all agreed that it was a mighty close call.

Of course all the excitement robbed the boys in khaki of further sleep. Indeed they were so wide awake that they did not even think of dozing again, so they all sat up, wrapped their overcoats about them and discussed the details of the raid.

"I'm thinking we are mighty near the front now, Danny," said Dawson, "for those Boches don't venture very far from their own trenches now-a-days I guess. I should say—what?—where?"

Danny interrupted him.

"Listen! What's that? More raiding or—no, it can't be. It's too steady. Why, man, it must be the big guns at the front. Whoop-e-e, we're gettin' mighty close to the trenches or I miss my guess."

"Why I believe you are right. Sounds like a big Fourth of July celebration," said Dawson after he had paused to listen.

Above the clanking of the train and the rattle of the rails Danny had caught a muffled booming sound that seemed almost continuous. He could tell that it came from a point far away. It was more like the continuous rumble and grumble of a distant thunder storm. It was the noise of the big guns at the front; the sound which Danny and his companions were destined to hear constantly night and day for months thereafter.

Every one else on the flat car became conscious of the grumbling rumble, too, and all sat in silence for a long time listening to the ominous noise. It never seemed to increase in volume or grow any nearer. It was just a continuous ever-present sound that ere long began to merge in with the other noises round about until the men did not notice it at all. But it was always there when one stopped to listen for it.

Once, when the train made a sharp turn to the right and came out into a broad, flat, hill-less sec-

tion, Danny and the rest could dimly discern, very, very far off and well down beyond the horizon line a faint pinkish flush in the night sky, that was punctuated by needle-like flashes of searchlight arms. And this sight thrilled every man on the car for word was passed along that under that pinkish sky, miles and miles away from the railroad, were the front line trenches.

It was only a glimpse that they caught, but it stirred the men in olive drab to a quicker and more eager interest in their surroundings. Hundreds of eyes peered through the darkness for signs of war. Nor were they lacking. At every darkened station they rolled through, the Americans could see shadowy forms of men in uniform. It was hard to tell through the blackness whether they were Poilus, Tommies or Sammies, but they were men in uniform, and as the troop train passed and the fact was shouted through the night that it was loaded with Americans, cheers and shouts of enthusiasm were raised by every one.

On rolled the train, but, much to their disappointment, not in the general direction of the quarter where the pink sky had been seen. Instead it seemed to be traveling at right angles and slightly away from that location.

An hour passed, and still another hour, and on they traveled. Dawn began to streak the eastern sky and it was four o'clock by Danny's

wrist watch before the long, serpent-like train slowly came to a stop, and through the gray half-light of dawn, Danny could see that they were in another one of the many quaint French villages they had passed through. Only this one looked a little the worse for wear, for in the gathering daylight he could see a partially wrecked stone church and several other shattered buildings. Evidently this village at some time or another had been raided by aeroplanes or else it had been the object of German shells. But it was far from the present battle line now for only the distant murmuring rumble of the big guns could be heard.

Welcome orders came for the men to detrain and they obeyed with a will, for they felt as if they needed an opportunity to stretch their cramped legs and take the kinks out of their stiffened muscles. However, plenty of opportunity came for them to limber up, for within a few minutes after the troop train was emptied came the order to fall in, and soon after, the orders were given to move forward.

"Guess we're on the last lap of our journey now, for I don't think our home in France is very far off," said Corporal Dawson.

And the big Nebraskan was right. Through the shell marked town they swung, and out onto a beaten highway, white with powdery dust and

reaching away across a long flat plain that was just one huge checkerboard of cultivated fields. Along this highway they tramped for better than a half hour, and soon signs of another town began to appear, and in the center of the huddled group of quaint old buildings raised aloft on a snow white pole floated the Stars and Stripes. This Danny was soon to learn marked the headquarters of their particular brigade, located in an old chateau in the heart of the little village of C—— de V———. It was here in this village that the troops, of which Danny's Company was a part, were to be billeted while they received their final training, preliminary to going into action.

The village of C—— de V——— was one of a score of villages all in the same general vicinity and all linked together by long winding highways, in which the American troops in France were quartered. Danny did not know it at the time, but the surrounding country was literally packed with men in khaki. Americans all making themselves ready to deliver the final blow that would crush the Huns and bring the big war to an end. In every village were billeted thousands of these fighting nephews of Uncle Sam, and outside of each of these villages were broad flat stretches of plain used as training grounds for the Americans.

That C—— de V——— had seen its trying moments in the great War was evident to the

boys of Company CC, as they tramped through the narrow streets of the town. Here and there were shattered remnants of buildings and practically every church in the town was laid in ruins, which Danny learned was in keeping with the general ruthlessness practiced by the Boches in every town that came under their cannon fire.

Their entrance into the town was an event of popular interest, for hundreds of cheering residents and thousands of dirty, but enthusiastic children lined the streets and yelled and saluted and blew kisses at the boys from the U. S. A.

Through the center of the town swung the column of infantry. Then halt was called and the men given permission to fall out, while final details were perfected for their billeting. Several companies of American infantry of Danny's own regiment had arrived in town a few hours before and they had only just gotten settled when on their heels came this additional train load of vigorous young men eagerly looking for breakfast and a place to spread their blankets at nightfall.

In anticipation of their coming, American engineers had thrown together some make-shift barrack buildings on the outskirts of the town along with mess-hall, field kitchens and the like, but these hardly provided room for all, so it was a question of utilizing barns and other buildings

and even dwellings as billets until better accommodations could be provided.

But the work of locating the men proceeded systematically, and presently Sergeant Hughes appeared and took charge of three squads of Company CC, the Wurra-wurra Squad being included, and marched them off to their new quarters.

CHAPTER VIII.

DANNY MEETS THE SPHINX AMBULANCE DRIVERS.

The town of C—— de V———, normally of about three thousand population, was assuredly crowded to its limits when the new American troops took quarters there. But the sturdy, and always friendly and enthusiastic inhabitants were not in the least disturbed by the closeness of their quarters, or the overcrowded condition of the town, and the men who were not able to find room in the barracks, were assigned to a variety of different kinds of billets, such as barn farm-houses, a deserted dance hall and theatre, and even the one time parish house of a now demolished church.

All together it was quite comfortable, and since Danny and the members of the Wurra-wurra Squad, along with the two other squads of CC Company were assigned to quarters in a rather well kept barn that had seen no animal occupants for two years, they were quite contented. Lofts partly filled with hay provided comfortable sleeping quarters, and the broad barn floor promised to provide excellent lounging space, when, indeed,

the infantrymen found any time at all to lounge which proved to be at rare intervals, after the first day at C—— de V———.

Like the many other towns in that section of France, practically everything was turned over to the use of the Americans. The men in khaki were greeted with open arms everywhere and *"Vive Amerika"* was shouted enthusiastically by men, women and children every time a company of the boys in brown swung through the town on their way to their training grounds.

The first day in their new quarters was practically granted as a day of rest, and after they had been assigned their billet, and had washed up in the cold water of a big well close at hand, and had breakfasted in the long mess hall not far distant, Danny, Corporal Dawson, Mickey O'Connor, Tommy Ryan, Bailey and several others decided to see the little town. They were not the only ones, however, who felt disposed to do likewise, and soon the narrow streets were crowded with an ever-moving stream of American soldiers, surging down one side of the thoroughfare and up the other. But C—— de V——— was so tiny and so huddled together that, as Mickey expressed it, "It could be seen in a single eye full," and it was not long before Danny and his friends had taken in every nook and corner in the quaint old place, including the startlingly large cemetery

where they found innumerable crosses marking the resting places of soldiers, both French, English and Canadian.

There was a separate stretch of burying ground also, and these contained the mounds that proved to be the graves of German soldiers. Most of these graves were unmarked, and many of them were not identified at all. These first real evidences of the ruthlessness of the great war in which they were soon to take part, made the fellows quite sober for the moment, and little was said as they filed out of the cemetery into the streets again.

They were back at this billet quite before they were due, after the round of sight seeing, for most of them felt very tired and decided to catch a wink of sleep before mess call at mid-day and make up for time lost the night before. Indeed mess came all too soon for many of them, and some were half inclined to pass their meal in preference for some unbroken slumber. But the lure of the mess hall was too strong to resist.

Afternoon was spent by the officers in working out the general scheme of things so that routine training could be started the following day, and as a result of this there were a great many details assigned after mess time, and those who were not unlucky enough to be given some tasks to do improved the shining hours by washing and clean-

ing up and "pressing the wrinkles out of their blankets" as Mickey termed his occupation when some one found him rolled up in his sleeping outfit trying to catch an extra forty winks.

Hard work and intensive training in the actual handling of the weapons of war began in earnest the day after the infantrymen arrived. Just beyond the village to the east, a training ground had been established in several long fields that were fringed on all sides by land that had been under cultivation. Here the men in khaki were to spend many hours a day learning the intricacies of machine guns, rifles, hand grenades, trench mortars, gas attacks and the host of other formidable weapons which the boys in khaki would soon know to perfection under the careful tutelage of two squads of real French Poilus, all of them veterans of the big war and now on special detail to the American camps to teach their new allies the tricks of modern warfare.

Reveille sounded as usual next morning at quarter to five, and when Danny heard the bugles ringing out through the crisp fall air his mind leaped backward through time, and over oceans to the days spent at Camp Wills. They seemed remote and almost dusty history now, and his pulse quickened and his heart beat fast when he realized that he was now very much closer to actual hostilities than he had been a few weeks

previous, and he wondered how much closer he would be a few weeks hence.

Setting up exercise in a big field behind one of the barrack buildings proved to be the first thing on the programme of the day, and stripped to their waists in the sharp air, the fellows went to the bending and stretching and reaching with a vigor that soon had their blood surging through their fine young muscular bodies. Then came wash up and breakfast.

At seven o'clock promptly, commands to fall in were given, and soon company after company swung through the village streets keeping step to their own singing and whistling and feeling in the highest of spirits. Their way led them toward the training ground and all were eager to have a first look at hand grenades, machine guns, trench mortars, gas masks and the rest of the promising implements which they were soon to handle.

The training field proved to be but a fifteen minute march from the center of the town and ere long the columns swung from the high road into broad fields, and at command stacked arms and broke ranks.

Squads were then detailed in charge of one or two of the aforementioned Poilus and an officer or non-com. to go to various designated portions of the field for their specialized training, and by

some time. I judged there was something doing when the hurry calls for ammunition came through. Did you fellows notice the line of trucks that went by?"

"Bet your boots we did," said Mickey.

But talking soon proved to be a difficult matter, for true to Andrews' prediction, the road had been changed during the day's bombardment. They were still quite a distance from the nearest batteries, which the boys could see flashing intermittently as the guns split the night with a ripping tearing roar. Evidently German shells had been scattered all over the area through which they traveled for the road was literally shot to pieces.

The big truck lurched and groaned, and slipped and skidded in a most perilous manner and the boys began to wonder whether there was any danger of the shells they carried exploding from so much jarring. But Andrews assured them that they were safe until the priming caps had been set which would not be done until they arrived at the battery.

This made the boys feel a bit more comfortable, yet the possibility of having the heavy truck loaded with steel projectiles overturn suddenly with them under it, was not the pleasantest to contemplate.

And presently more was added to their peril

in a way most startling. Danny heard a shrill hissing whistle overhead, and instinctively the four men ducked. Two hundred yards behind there was a blinding flash and a terrific crash. It was the first shell Danny and Mickey had ever heard and it made a decided impression on them. But they were destined to hear many more and soon too.

"Huh, those Boches are feelin' for the road again. Goin' to sprinkle a few shells in our direction," said Andrews, as he clung to the big steering wheel and kept the lurching truck right side up, with a great deal of effort.

"Zowy—there comes another one," shouted Andrews' partner, and off to the left a hundred yards or more, another explosion took place. Another and another followed, and one came so close that Danny heard the steel particles whistling in the air over the truck.

"Let 'er flicker," shouted Andrews in great glee, for with the approach of peril his spirits seemed to soar higher, "let 'em come. They are rotten shots anyhow. Wow, look at that one."

"That one" proved to be an earsplitting explosion closer at hand than any of its predecessors. Indeed the shells were dropping uncomfortably near.

But just as suddenly as it had started, the shelling stopped. The Huns had turned their atten-

tion to the nearest battery, just below the brow of a hill, a mile distant; or at least that is the way it looked to the fellows on the ammunition truck for a line of explosions began dropping off to the right, but overshooting the battery by a half mile.

"Say, if those Boches had moved that last one a bit nearer they'd have made a pretty good haul, eh?" said Andrews jovially, between wrenches at the steering wheel of the heavy truck.

"You bet. They would have caught a fighting Irishman and a —— good-night."

Andrews and his partner were struggling frantically with the steering wheel and shifting gears, as the truck began to lurch and pitch about like a ship in a heavy gale. Then suddenly it began to lean far over; perilously far, and Danny and Mickey experienced a sickening sensation as they realized that it was too far over to ever be righted again.

"Jump! Jump! Get clear," cried Andrews, "she's going."

And jump they did. All four scrambling out of the narrow seats flung themselves off the tottering vehicle just as it lurched sidewise and with a crash pitched over into a shell crater, which Andrews had vainly tried to work it out of.

"Huh, here's a pretty mess, hang it," shouted Andrews when they had all scrambled to their

feet. "Don't dare to strike a light to see what's happened or we'd be marked by the Huns right off."

Just then out of the darkness came the put-put-put of a motorcycle and an officer came up and stopped before them.

"Where's the truck for G Battery," he shouted when he caught sight of the four men in the road.

"Here sir," said Andrews, "in the ditch, sir."

"What!" cried the officer.

"Ditched, sir. In the shell hole."

"Great guns, get it out. Get it out quick. No, no, get busy and carry some of those shells over to the battery. Need 'em. All out. Hurry. I'll send more men, hurry!" and off he went back toward the battery under the brow of the hill.

"Here's where we fit in," yelled Danny to Mickey, pulling off his overcoat and tossing his hat on the ground beside it.

"We'll carry shells, too. Come on," cried Mickey, all excitement, as he followed Danny's example.

The four men felt their way down into the shell hole and located the overturned truck. Three-inch shells were spilled in all directions, and each of the fellows gathered up one of the heavy cylinders in his arms and climbed out of the crater again.

"This way," cried Andrews, who knew the location of the battery, and off they hurried, stumbling, slipping, sliding and falling more than once on the uneven shell-swept ground over which they traveled. And as they plunged on toward the hidden battery the bombardment grew more intense. The Germans were cutting loose with all that they had, and shells dropped about in every direction. The batteries on the hill, too, were firing fast and furiously, and before Danny and Mickey realized it they were in the midst of one of the heaviest artillery engagements that had taken place in that sector in some months.

But the boys were keyed up to such a pitch and were so excited over the fact that they were able to do something in that great conflict that they never noticed the shell fire. On they hurried, staggering under the load of the three-inch shell. And as they drew near the battery they met other men coming toward them.

Hastily Andrews explained the location of the disabled truck to these men, then hurried on. Others came, artillerymen, infantrymen, and signal men, and in less than ten minutes there was a continuous string of men moving across the uneven shell-swept area back of the battery, carrying shells from the overturned truck to the gun.

Of course, Danny, Mickey, Andrews and Bor-

den were the first to arrive with their much-needed burden. The last shell had been fired from G Battery, and the artillerymen were fretting and fuming and eagerly awaiting the arrival of more ammunition. How they welcomed the four men, with their shells! A big bombardment was under way and they did not want to have their gun the weak sister in that line of fire-spitting monsters, that was concealed along the ridge.

"Shells, more shells," they shouted, and Danny and Mickey and the two Canadians turned about and retraced their steps running as best they could and blundering along in and out of shell holes and old trenches.

Star shells were being sent up by the Germans now, and these helped the ammunition carriers to find their way across the uneven ground a little easier. The shells soared aloft, broke forth into a glowing star that threw a whitish light over everything, and hung in the sky for a brief interval before falling earthward.

Still the shells kept dropping about. One burst almost dead ahead of Danny, fifty yards off. He made a mental note as he hurried on that if he had been traveling a little faster or if the shell had been traveling a little slower they would very likely have met and—but it didn't happen, and Danny in his excitement at being

under fire dashed forward with yells of enthusiasm, though he did not know exactly what he was yelling for.

On the way back he met some of the other men returning to the battery, all cuddling precious shells in their arms. Some of the men staggered along under the weight of two of them and seemed quite happy. Forward dashed Danny and his three companions. Again they reached the overturned truck. There were other men there getting shells, too. Each gathered up a projectile, climbed out of the shell hole, and was off back toward the battery again. Danny and Mickey and the Canadians did likewise, and presently they had started on their second trip.

Danny staggered along excitedly, Borden just beside him, Mickey immediately behind him and Andrews just to his right. All four were puffing and panting. Hats and overcoats had been stripped off and left near the truck, but they were perspiring in spite of the chill of the night air.

"Some Job—wow—these—old—shells — er—heavy."

BOOM!

Danny was not exactly certain as to what had happened. At first he thought that the shell he carried in his arms had exploded. The report was ear splitting and the flash of light was blinding. The earth trembled and rocked, and then

seethed upward, and Danny went upward with it.

Over and over he was tossed, a plaything of some terriffic force. Things rushed past him but he, too, was rushing. It seemed as if he had been flung off through space and was traveling on for miles and miles. Then suddenly he landed. He came down with a rush and sank into something soft and yielding; something cushion-like in its softness gathered all about him, hemmed him in, pressed him down, crowded about him; got into his eyes, nose and mouth; strangled him; stifled him; made him cough and gasp. He was buried alive, buried under the earth hurled up by a shell that had exploded close to him!

A terrible sickening sensation swept over him when he realized what had happened. How deep under the surface was he? Could he get out? Would he ever reach the open air again? Or would he suffocate down there under that heavy oppressive blanket of soggy earth. Already his breath was fast going. His head was splitting and his chest ached. Frantically he began to struggle, kicking and clawing and digging. But the more he kicked and clawed the more the earth seemed to pack about him. It was hideous. It was an awful death he was facing.

But still the fighting blood in him would not let him yield. He struggled harder, he kicked,

he clawed, he squirmed like a huge ground mole. But it seemed almost helpless. He could never get out! He was suffering terrible agonies now. Oh, for a breath of air. Just a chance to exhale the pent up air in his lungs and inhale just one sweet, fresh breath of pure air. He—would —never—never—— His mind went blank. He had fainted.

. . . . . .

When next Danny became conscious, Mickey and Andrews were standing over him. They were in a tumbled down barn, and Mickey was holding a flashlight so that it illuminated the place while Andrews was applying artificial respiration to him, working his arms up and down and causing his lungs to exhale and inhale by pressure on the chest.

"He's brathin' r-right now, praise be,"—said Mickey; " 'twill not be long before he's conscious. Poor Danny—hooray he *is* conscious. Danny, bhoy, are ye hur-rt?"

"I didn't think you were coming back at all," said Andrews, wiping some dirt from the corner of Danny's mouth with his handkerchief.

"What—how—er—say, how'd I get here—who got me out?"

"We did," said Mickey; "sur-re t' shell threw me right down on top o' the pile o' dirt you were buried under and I felt you clawin' and scratchin'

around in there. And first thing I knows yer hand came out. So me and Andrews just grabs holt and pulls and digs and out you comes, lookin' like you were dead for sure. Guess you had about as narrer escape as you want, eh? It got poor Borden. Must have blown him t' pieces. Couldn't find t' poor feller."

"What! really! Killed him?" exclaimed Danny.

"Yes," said Andrews sadly, "poor Bob's gone. He was right beside you, wasn't he?"

"Yes," said Danny shuddering a little as he thought of the incident. Then he added—"but the battery. How about it!" he tried to struggle to his feet as he spoke.

"Oh another truck came up just when we were yankin' you out so we left off carryin' shells and carried you instead. We lugged you over to this old barn, and if the place don't get hit with a shell before we get out why perhaps you'll live."

"Thanks to your foine wurrk," cut in Mickey.

"Oh, that was nothing," said Andrews deprecatingly of his own good work, "but I think if Danny here can walk we'd do well to get out and find our overcoats and see if we can't get a ride back toward the base on one of the empty trucks. They stop running at daylight, and that won't be very long coming."

Danny could walk after a fashion. He was

weak and unsteady at first, but he gained strength fast, and soon after they had left the old barn and started across the uneven ground following the leadership of Andrews, he began to feel very much better.

The batteries up on the ridge were still hammering away, and their roar was terrific. The Germans, too, were giving back shell for shell, apparently, for all about the ridge explosions were taking place. Star shells were going up at intervals, too, illuminating the landscape and helping the boys to find their way.

Soon they reached what once had been the road. It was pitted and scarred with shell holes and Danny wondered how any of the ammunition transport trucks traveled that way at all. But they were still passing at intervals, the skilled drivers piloting them safely over the treacherous ground in spite of the blackness of the night.

After a search they found four overcoats instead of three which made them all feel very sad over the loss of Borden, Andrew's side partner.

"Poor old Bob," sighed the Canadian, gathering up the overcoat with his own and turning away from the wrecked truck.

CHAPTER X.

OFF TO THE TRENCHES.

Getting back to the base was not difficult, for the three fellows had only to tumble aboard one of the returning ammunition trucks, identify themselves to the drivers, and soon they were on their way.

It was daylight when they reached the big town which they had left so gaily the evening before, and Danny and Mickey could hardly believe that only twelve hours had elapsed since they had sat down to dinner in the little French restaurant with Hopper and Hobby.

That restaurant was the first place for which the two Americans headed, while Andrews, with a farewell handshake, went off in another direction to report to his superior officer the incidents of the night.

A good breakfast was about the most refreshing thing the tired boys could think of just then, except possibly a pair of blankets to crawl between, and they ate ravenously everything the waiter set before them, talking meanwhile of the night's events.

"Great stuff, wasn't it, Mickey," exclaimed Danny, enthusiastically.

"Right ye are, Danny, and t' think it all happint in wan night. Sur-re it seems loike a week," answered Mickey.

"Yes, we still have a day and a night of our leave left," said Danny. Then he added, "What'll we do?"

"I'm a thinkin' we'd best find a truck goin' back, with a nice lot of blankets in it. An' if we can, why we'll jist spind t' r-rist o' our time bechune a blanket sandwich back t' camp," said Mickey, yawning to show how tired he was.

This proved to be agreeable to Danny, too, so after their checks were paid they wandered out into the streets and in the general direction of the point where the American transport trains were arriving and departing. And soon they were curled up on the hard floor of one of the big empty trucks returning campwards, with a request to be dropped off at C——de V——.

Danny and Mickey were the heroes of the Wurra-wurra Squad when they returned, for they lost little time in telling their night's experiences to Dawson, Big Bill, Brick Logan and the rest, but the news of their escapade did not travel beyond the personnel of the squad, for Corporal Dawson took the two lads aside and told them that unwittingly they had broken an order that

had been issued some time ago, that no men of the American forces should visit the firing line except under orders.

"But," he added, "you must have had a whale of a good time, and I sure wish I had been with you. It won't be long though before you'll get your fill of that same sort of work, for there are rumors afloat that we're to be sent forward soon to relieve some of the regulars in the supporting trenches."

"Really?" exclaimed Danny. "Wow, that's the stuff."

And the rumor, unlike most rumors that floated through the big camp, proved true.

Mickey and Danny had just succeeded in making up their lost sleep and reported at reveille on Monday morning, when announcement was made that no more passes would be issued, for the battalion was expected to move at any time. And three days later came the order to "Stand To," and be ready to march at a moment's notice.

With feverish eagerness the Americans began their preparations to leave. Every pulse beat quicker and all hopes were high for these orders meant that their days of training were over and that they were now ready to take a hand in the big war. And to make these preparations look really businesslike the final touch was added to every man's equipment in the form of a gas mask

and a steel helmet, or "tin hat" as Mickey called it.

The moon was well up, and the night was crisp and cold with frost gathering everywhere, when the commands to fall in were given them.

"Forward March," and through the narrow and crowded streets of C—— de V—— for the last time swung the column of men in khaki, bound for the front.

Out into the by-road, past the old training ground and on through a deserted countryside, marched the columns of men with swinging strides, their hobnailed feet beating time to a marching song that echoed through the night. It was wonderfully stirring and Danny and his pals who strode along beside him were thrilled with enthusiasm. They were marching; steadily marching to the biggest adventure of all; to the trenches and to real glory. Perhaps some of the lads wondered whether they would ever return again, but if such thoughts flitted through their minds they never voiced them, but sang on bravely and never faltered in their strides.

For an hour they toiled over the hard, frozen country road that wound through fields and tiny hamlets. Then presently the by-roads joined a main road and here a halt was called. The broader thoroughfare was crowded with men, thousands of them marching, marching, march-

ing, marching. And all were headed in the one direction—toward the trenches.

"Did you ever see so many?" asked Dawson of Danny. "And they are all Americans. There must be something mighty big about to happen up there in the front."

"It sure looks that way. When do we break into the column?" asked Danny, but for answer came the command echoing down the line for attention. Then Danny understood, for in the moonlight he could see that a portion of the Old Fighting Fifth was now in the main column filing past them, and Danny guessed that their battalion would swing in and complete the regiment presently. And such proved the case. In a few moments, they, too, had turned out into the main highway and become a part of that long serpentine line of men that was wending its way toward the front.

On and on and on they marched to the music of their own song. Hour after hour they pressed forward. Only occasionally a halt was called and then because some flying automobile filled with officers, or some cumbersome ammunition train wanted to use the road. They were marching under pressure, and it was plain to the men that they were supposed to reach the place they were bound for before daylight.

Now and then they passed through villages.

Not tired sleepy villages like C—— de V—— but wide-awake villages that throbbed with life. Always the streets were crowded with soldiers, American for the most part, with here and there a French or English or Canadian regiment intermingled. Motor cars, transportation trucks, ammunition trains and even batteries of field artillery crowded the streets, moving this way or that way through the press of soldiers.

But they never lingered long at any of these points. The column always swept onward, steadily in the one direction—to the front.

That they were fast approaching the first line trenches and the scenes of battle was evident from the ever increasing volume of roaring guns. From C—— de V—— the sound had been merely a far-off murmuring grumble, but as mile after mile was put behind them Danny and the rest could discern a difference in the firing. The sound of the heavy guns stood out above the rest of the noise like distinct beats on a base drum. Still later it ceased to be a continuous grumble and developed into a steady drum, drum, drum,—regular pulsations; the steady fire of the three-inch field pieces. And breaking into this rhythmic pounding came the sudden shocks of the big guns.

In the sky, Danny could see the flash of bursting shells and the glare of the German star shells,

and across the heavens swept long finger-like rays of searchlights, looking, always looking, for the air raiders overhead.

On they marched, drawing nearer and ever nearer the din of the battle, until soon they arrived at still another town, and this almost within the zone being swept by the shells of the Germans. It was a big town and crowded to its very limits with men, munition trains, trucks, limbers, battery caissons, field pieces, rushing ambulances, and swiftly moving motor cycles. It was a scene that will live long in the memory of Danny and his companions, for it was their first glimpse of the feverish excitement that reigned just behind the lines.

Dawn was coming on, and with it came the news that an attack was about to take place from the front line trenches. Then Danny knew why they had been rushed up so hastily and in so many thousands. It was to have them standing ready to support in case reënforcements were necessary.

Just as the first gray light began to flood the landscape, there came a startling pause everywhere. The thundering batteries on the ridge beyond the town went silent together. A great hush seemed to fall over everything. The men, in surprise, stopped their talking and laughing. Shouts were silenced, and only the hum of pass-

ing motor trucks was to be heard. It was mystifying. Then suddenly from far, far out ahead of them, so far that they could scarcely hear it, was raised a great cheer. That seemed the signal for everything to break loose again, for at the same instant every gun along the ridge belched forth a withering barrage fire.

"They've gone. They're over the top," yelled some one translating the far-off cheer for Danny and every one else, and then they all understood.

In that lull the Americans in the first line trenches had started their charge. They were at it now hammering away at the Huns giving them a good taste of Yankee courage and Yankee fighting ability. Every one was on his toes. Danny was almost as excited as if he were an eye witness to that thrilling scene that was taking place a mile or two in front of them.

How were they making out? Were they carrying the German trenches or were they being driven back? Would they need the reserves that were massed in the town back of them ready to move forward if the Germans proved too strong? Was there any word? Oh, was there any word!

Then suddenly a shout and a mad cheer went up from a stone building nearby and several young officers waved their arms, while a sergeant rushed out and shouted wildly to a friend.

"Wow, they've carried the first and second

line trenches. They are in front of the third line trenches. They are driving the Huns before them and they are going right on. The lucky beggars. How I wish I were with them!"

It was like hearing the returns of a big baseball game to Danny, and as the Sergeant's words were passed up and down the line, every one cheered. Word was being flashed back by telephone from observation posts in the front line trenches, to the stone house where officers were quartered, and as the news came it was called out by the enthusiastic Sergeant so that the troops could hear.

"Still at it," he shouted a moment later, "they've cleaned out every foot of trench in front of them. Swept through a village. They are crowding the Boches out."

And again.

"Still they go. The 1-5th has taken the town and is digging in a mile beyond. The 1-9th machine gun company is holding ten pill boxes. Batteries are moving up."

Then came the real evidences of the battle. With siren screaming for an open road, the first of the field ambulances flashed into sight, two begrimed and blood-smeared drivers, riding madly between the ranks of soldiers who fell back to give it room. Then came another and still another all filled with wounded men, being hur-

ried back to the nearest dressing station. And presently there rushed by one ambulance, the drivers of which Danny recognized in spite of their mud and blood-stained clothes and disheveled garments. It was the Sphinx ambulance manned by Hobby and Hopper. Danny yelled and waved to them, and they, catching sight of Danny, waved back, but hurried onward for they knew that perhaps the lives of the four wounded men which their ambulance carried depended upon the speed they made.

Danny could not help but envy the two Sphinx lads, for they had been where he had never been and they had seen what he longed to see.

Still the batteries hammered out their barrage fire, still the reports flashed in of how the battle was going, and still the ambulances streamed by.

Soon wounded men, well used up, but still able to walk, began to arrive, and from them the eager waiting men got news of the engagement. "The Yankees had carried every trench and every dug-out they had attacked." "The losses were heavy, very heavy." "The 1-5th was well shot to pieces." "The Boches had suffered, too." "Five regiments wiped out or scattered." "Thousands of prisoners."

Then came the first of these prisoners. Under guard marching sullenly forward came a perfect mob of mud bespattered, unkempt, half starved,

and very miserable looking Boches. Hundreds of them filed by going to the rear. Some wounded, some sullen and defiant, and some frankly happy that their lot was that of a prisoner and not worse.

"Crackey, but how I would like to have been in the thick of it," said Danny to Dawson, as he watched these sights; "just our luck to be held here as reserves. Hang it I want to see some real fighting."

"Oh, we'll see it yet, don't you worry," said Dawson. "We may not get a whack at the Boches this time but we'll be there when the next drive starts, you mark my word."

Soon the noise of battle began to lull. The guns on the surrounding ridges kept up a constant hammer, hammer, hammer, but the distant roll of hostilities grew fainter and fainter until finally it was evident to all that things had subsided and the Americans had finished their attack and were busy making things secure against a counter-attack by the Germans.

"I wonder what's to be done with us now," queried Danny.

"We'll know in a minute," said Dawson, who had noticed Major Turner and several other officers coming from the stone house by the roadside.

And they did. Soon came the news that they

would billet themselves wherever they could, make themselves as comfortable as possible and get as much sleep as they could, for with the coming of darkness they would go to the relief of the men who had so gallantly won the new position from the Germans that morning.

"Wow, the front line trenches for us," exclaimed Dawson, and every heart beat faster when the news was passed along.

Danny and every one else was dog-tired and blankets were unrolled quickly. All sorts of shelter was used for the infantrymen, but before they turned in they ate a cold and rather dry breakfast of biscuits and dried beef, which they washed down with the water in their cantines.

Most of the Wurra-wurra Squad bunked in together in the rear room of a deserted French farm house which at one time or another had suffered from contact with a German shell.

The boys cleared away a space for themselves on the plaster-covered floor, and quickly took to their blankets. And in short order they were all snoring lustily, in spite of the prospects that they would be actually under fire a few hours after they awoke.

It was the middle of the afternoon before they were routed out, and told to prepare for their entrance into the trenches. Water bottles were filled, extra provisions served to all, ammunition

supplies attended to, gas masks inspected, and campaign hats discarded for the steel helmets that had been dangling, fireman fashion, from their belts.

The preparations lasted most of the afternoon, but during it all Danny and several others found time enough to write a few brief notes of farewell to those at home. There was something comforting about this writing home, and something very sad, too. Danny's emotions were a mixture between elation at last being ready to enter the fray and sadness at the thought that perhaps this would be the last letter his mother and father would ever receive from him. The note he wrote conveyed these sentiments wonderfully well.

Darkness came on very, very slowly for the boys in khaki. Every minute seemed like an hour and every hour a week.

Wrapped in their overcoats and packed with their belongings and looking like dromedaries with great humps on their backs, they stood about, in the chilled November air waiting, waiting, waiting. Gray daylight began to fade gradually, and black night appeared in the eastern sky. Here and there a guarded light was lit, landscape began to fade out entirely and one by one the stars appeared.

Then through the town rang the blasts of

bugles. "Fall in! Attention!" came down the line, and the thousands of khaki-clad fellows found their places, and stood erect awaiting the next commond.

"Forward Ho!" came the orders and every foot stepped off without the least hesitancy, though each of the chaps knew that the chances were about even that they were departing possibly never to return again. On they marched, their heavy hobnailed trench shoes crunching the frozen earth under foot with each rhythmic stride.

It was a darkened landscape through which they traveled, but though night hid many of the evidences of tragedy round about, still through the gloom, stark trees, stripped of their branches by shell fire, shattered houses, wrecked transports, an overturned battery caisson, and other signs of the recent battle could be discerned by the boys. Danny was quite certain that by the light of day the country would look like nothing more than utter desolation.

Soon they began to encounter trench lines. Some of them old and abandoned, others still in good condition. And ere long a halt was called before a veritable network of trenches that cut the ground in every direction. That it was unsafe to travel much further above ground in their present formation, was evident to all. Danny

had heard more than one ominous voice hissing overhead, and shells were bursting uncomfortably near.

They had left their own fire-belching batteries far behind now. Looking about Danny could discern tongues of fire leaping here and there from the surface of the ground in the rear, marking momentarily the location of a hidden field piece. And all the time the roar of the guns blotted out every other sound.

This was the point where the troops went under ground. Quickly but orderly one company after another filed into the various communication trenches, then under the leadership of their officers they worked forward from one chain of trenches to another.

Soon they were in the American trenches that had been left that morning by the men who stormed the Boches' position. Already, leading from these, communication trenches had been dug, reaching across what had so lately been "No Man's Land." And into these narrow passages filed the new troops who were to relieve the men who had done so well but a few hours before.

These newly-dug trenches did not stretch for a very great distance, however, for presently they opened up into the most bewildering maze of trenches, tunnels and dugouts that the men could possibly imagine. These were what had

been left of the German trenches captured at daylight. But everywhere were indications of the appalling work that had been done by the terrific French and American artillery. Great sections of concrete and steel, onetime "pill boxes" or machine gun pits, were blown asunder. Great holes yawned skyward where but recently huge underground caverns had existed. And everywhere was barbed wire, debris, and a hopeless clutter of things, not to mention boots, articles of clothing, shattered rifles or machine guns, and an occasional limp and pathetic-looking body, sprawled out and appearing very grotesque in the gloom.

This maze of trenches led through the very heart of a mass of wreckage and shattered brick and stone work which had once been a village. Under the iron heel of war it had been reduced to a shapeless mass of debris. It was this village that the Americans had captured in the morning. The new troops passed underground through the old German trenches, and before long they came to the point far on the other side where the Americans had dug themselves in and cleared away the old German positions.

Through all this maze of blown-up territory the Americans had already done a great deal, and the new men soon found their way to the farthest

point in the line where the fellows who had fought so well, were eagerly awaiting their coming.

Words of congratulation from the new men, and of encouragement from the old were exchanged as they crowded past each other, some returning for a much needed and well earned rest while others, new to the work and full of hope and enthusiasm, pushed their way in to take the vacant places.

"We licked 'em good," whispered one man as he passed Danny.

"Yes, and we left a fine mess for you fellows to clean up," said the man behind him as he, too, crowded by.

But the next man made the most thrilling suggestion of all:

"You'll get your's in the morning, Buddy," he said to Danny, "those Boches will be back with a counter-attack at daylight."

CHAPTER XI.

BEATING BACK THE HUNS.

That the Germans would start a counter-attack at daybreak was the opinion of every one, and as Danny squeezed his way into the newly established and none too securely fortified trenches past the Regulars who were leaving, he realized that a good night's work lay before him.

There were a thousand and one things to be done to make the new trenches quite secure and as soon as observers were sent out and guards mounted to watch over the parapet for the coming of the Boches, things began to move. Entrenching tools were brought out, huge reels of barbed wire, that had been moved forward into the trench by the engineers, were tossed over the top of the trench, and made ready for use, every stick of lumber was gathered up and the thousands of sandbags that had formed the parapet of the old German trench, and were now the parados or back wall of the American trench, were moved over to a new position and all the time the Germans, entrenched a hundred yards away were busy with machine guns and rifles,

while the German artillery, far beyond, was trying its best to drop shells into the new American front line trenches.

Picks and shovels were plied with a will, for the new defenders realized that the Regulars had had very little time to make the trenches deep enough or wide enough. Then, too, the American artillery had hammered them into such a chaos before the charge that morning, that in some places the ditch was far too deep and in other sections huge mounds of earth had been ploughed up. In the darkness the men worked, digging fiercely and building, building, building against the possible attack of the morrow.

A firing platform or step was constructed in the bottom of the trench so that the men could stand up and look over the top with ease and use their rifles freely in case of an attack.

Machine gun dugouts were also under way at various points, and here and there an underground retreat of the Germans was unearthed and opened up, usually to reveal hideous sights which were all quickly obliterated, the dead being removed and carried to the rear, where they could be disposed of and not remain gruesome reminders to the men in the trenches.

The work of building a new parapet out of the sandbags, many of which had been ripped and torn by shell and rifle fire, progressed swiftly,

too, and like so many ants carrying huge lumps of sugar the men carried the bags from one place to another, building up a solid wall of sand between themselves and the ever-watchful enemy.

To Danny and other members of the Wurra-wurra Squad fell the hardest and most difficult task of all, which was to go over the top and build barbed wire entanglements. But the boys had had a great deal of experience in handling the stubborn wire at the training grounds, and they knew exactly what was needed of them. So over the top they went with scores of others, and swiftly but skillfully yard upon yard of barbed wire was unreeled and woven between stakes that were driven into the ground.

How they worked! And how the bullets whistled about them. Of course the Boches knew that in all likelihood men were at work out there in the darkness fortifying the newly won trenches, and they made things as uncomfortable as possible for them by keeping up a continuous rifle and machine gun fire, which, though the Hun could see nothing definite to aim at, was uncomfortably accurate. The bullets whistled overhead with disturbing regularity, and sometimes they thumped into the ground very close to Danny. Twice he heard a sharp ping-g-g and felt the wire he held pushed violently aside.

And each time he found that a bullet had cut the strand within a few inches of his hand.

Big Bill Bailey, who worked beside him and proved a fine partner because of his tremendous strength, had a bullet pass through his coat sleeve between his arm and his body, without suffering a scratch and another ping-g-g off the edge of his helmet. And Corporal Dawson had one shoot away the steel shod heel of his trench shoes, as it ploughed into the earth at his feet. There were several casualties in CC Company, and several seriously wounded, that first night, but in spite of it all, the men worked up there in their exposed position, for hours, weaving a heavy barricade of barbed wire in front of the trench, which, it seemed to them, would prove complicated enough to prevent any one from ever getting through alive. But little did they guess the cunning of their enemy.

It was a thoroughly tired and weary crew that tumbled back into the trenches two hours before dawn, and curled up in their blankets to catch a nap while the sentries stood on the firing step and peered out into the darkness of "No Man's Land."

In spite of the nervous strain under which he had worked the last few hours Danny dropped off to sleep the moment he had his blankets wrapped about him.

But it seemed to him as if he had hardly closed his eyes when he was awakened by the most unearthly medley of sounds. Bells were ringing, bayonets were clattering against mess kits, and the officers' whistles were shrilling above the din. Danny was half dazed by it all, as he leapt to his feet and stared about. Through the gray half light of dawn he saw the men in his trench hastily donning their gas masks, and immediately he knew why all the clatter had been raised. It was a signal that the Boches had started a gas attack.

Eagerly Danny reached for his mask. His fingers, numbed by the cold, had a difficult time loosening it. Already he began to smell and taste the sickish presence of trench gas. He fumbled with the lacings of the helmet. He got it free, and slipped it over his face and head. And only just in time, for over the top of the trench came rolling a yellowish green cloud of smoke, so thick and so heavy that he could scarcely see the rifle he gripped in his hands.

"Stand To," came the orders and Danny mounted the firing step and peered over the parapet, but of course he could see nothing. Shoulder to shoulder with him was Big Bill on one side and Dawson on the other, and just beyond sturdy Mickey, with the rest of the squad close at hand. Danny knew they were all there,

although he could not see them. He could only vaguely distinguish the big outline of Dawson and Bailey, but he took great comfort in knowing that he was not all alone in that yellow green world of swirling gases that rolled about him.

There seemed to be little doubt but that the Boches would follow close after the gas, hoping to find a trench full of prostrated and half stifled Yankees. One tense moment after another Danny and the rest stood there, rifles leveled, waiting for the first sight of the Huns.

To his left a machine gun opened up with its staccato rattle, and an instant later from down the trench came sharp firing and the yell:—

"Here they come!"

Danny's heart seemed to skip a couple of beats and his grip closed firmer on the rifle he held. Still he peered before him, and still he could see nothing. Down the trenches rifles began to speak. Danny wanted to fire, too, but saw nothing to fire at.

Then, as if by a miracle, the yellow green world rolled by. A gusty puff of wind swept down the trench, and the green gas swirled away to his left and dispersed in the air disclosing before Danny's eyes, a world of gray light, and stretches of barren country of muddy brown earth. And stumbling, running and leaping over this ragged landscape, and looking grotesquely funny, came

a horde of mud-bespattered figures, with ugly faces, and staring eyes, and opened mouths from which emanated blood-curdling yells of attack. Danny's eyes were fixed on their glittering bayonets, the only bright spots in that shabby horde, and as he realized that before him were the frightful Germans, a great wrath swelled within him, and a great hate burned in his heart.

Instantly his rifle leapt to his shoulder. He singled out one of those ugly shambling individuals and fired, then he fired again and again and again. All about him men were firing. The din was deafening, and as the noise swelled and more and more rifles came into action, the feeling of hatred surged within Danny. He was fighting now; fighting madly. But he was cool; surprisingly cool. He took careful aim each time he fired, he pressed, not pulled the trigger, and he counted every shot and he knew exactly when he had fired the fifth and must pause to slip another clip of cartridges into the magazine.

And in one of those pauses he was surprised to discover something he had not noticed before. The barbed wire entanglements that he and the others had so faithfully and painfully labored the whole night long to construct, were cut in scores of places, and veritable lanes had been opened up in them, evidently by stealthy German patrols who had crawled out in the darkness, and un-

done with wire cutters, the work they had struggled so hard to finish. Right before him was a lane through the entanglement. One single whole strand of barbed wire was all that lay between the trench and the Boches. And in other places too great gaps had been cut away.

On came the Huns. Danny's rifle was at his shoulder again. He knew that they had a real attack to repel, and he fired and reloaded as fast as he could operate his rifle. At his side, Bailey, blood dripping from a wound in his face, was swearing and tugging at the bolt of his rifle. A cartridge had jammed. Just then came a grunt from further down the trench, and Bailey looked around. Leaping down from the firing platform, he rushed toward the stricken man who had fallen from the step, seized the rifle from hands that were not yet lifeless, and with a yell of triumph leapt up beside Danny again, and began firing once more.

Dawson, on the other side, was firing more slowly, but Danny knew the deadly accurateness of the Nebraskan's aim, and he felt that with every shot, one more figure toppled in that oncoming mob.

They were drawing nearer and nearer! They were scarcely twenty-five yards away! But their ranks were greatly thinned. Now they were striding through the wire entanglements. Nearer

and nearer with hideous yells and ugly faces leering, they came on.

Then, as if the Americans had suddenly decided that they had come quite far enough, the energy of the rifle fire redoubled. The gray-clad demons actually melted away. Some stopped still in utter surprise at the terrible and deadly effects of this American rifle work. Never in all their fighting had they encountered men who shot so well. Their companions were swept down from beside them like grain before a scythe. Where there had been ten in a group a moment ago one stood alone.

Their charge was broken! The withering fire took the Boches' nerve just when they seemed on the point of victory! Three of them actually came over the top of the trench, but they were dead before they struck the ground! The scores and scores of others, huddled in the lanes between the broken strands of barbed wire, were undetermined whether to go on or turn back.

Then suddenly all self-control fled, they broke and ran, nor did they look where they rushed, and many of them becoming enmeshed in the tangled barbed wire, rolled over and over on the ground, kicking and screaming in impotent rage as they tried to disentangle themselves.

One big German was caught that way in the lane before Danny. As if moved by the same

impulse, both he and Bailey leaped up and went over the top eager to capture the big man and make him a prisoner. But when the Boche saw them coming he raised his rifle and fired point blank at Bailey. Thanks to fate, he was a poor shot and the bullet whistled harmlessly over Bailey's shoulder. But the fighting Yankee was so enraged by this act that he clubbed his own rifle and was about to beat the German into unconsciousness, when from somewhere along the top of the American trench came a bullet that settled the treacherous Hun once and for all. And Bailey and Danny, at a call from Dawson, tumbled back into the trench again.

The retreat of the Germans was nothing more than a scramble back across the dead strewn "No Man's Land." Urged on by the withering rifle and machine gun fire from the American trenches, and scattered by the steady rain of shells in their midst, the Boches, or what was left of them, staggered frantically back toward the protection of their own dugouts, rifles flung from them, and their shambling, unsteady gate reflecting how thoroughly demoralized they were by the treatment they had received at the hands of these stubborn, fire-eating, khaki-clad nephews of Uncle Sam.

And as one by one they disappeared over the top of their own trench, Danny and the rest

CHAP. XI—The fighting Yankee clubbed his rifle.

could not help but utter cheers of victory. In their first encounter with the Huns the Fighting Fifth had beaten the Boches to a standstill, nor had they paid such a deadly toll themselves for the victory.

But with the attack over, a great deal of work remained to be done, for there was no telling when the Huns would reform, and attempt another attack. So while the American artillery, back beyond the trench line kept up an incessant hammering at the German trenches, and rifles and machine guns sprayed the German mud heaps with a deadly hail of bullets, squads went over the top, at the imminent risk of their lives, to patch up the breaks in their wire entanglements and weave new ones. And you may be sure that Danny and the rest of the Wurra-wurra Squad were among those present.

In spite of the peril in this work, Danny felt no fear at all. Indeed, he marveled at himself. Never once did thoughts of danger enter his mind. He seemed to work without thinking of anything in particular. He was just stirred by the excitement and adventure of it all and went on working madly and reveling in the knowledge that at last, after months and months of waiting, he was in the thick of things. And there, he told himself, he intended to remain and no

such thing as a German bullet or shell splinter could cheat him of the fun he was having.

Madly those fellows worked and worked and worked, stringing and restringing strands of wires, tangling and ensnarling it into an impassable and uncuttable mass, while their companions in the trenches and their friends at the big guns on the hills protected them by bombarding the German trenches and keeping every head down. Of course there were casualties among the wire stringers. Now and then a man went down with a grunt, or a startled cry of pain, and once in a while a German shell burst in the thick of the wiring party, killing and maiming some and destroying part of the entanglement, thus causing more work to be done. Fortunately the Wurra-wurra Squad came through again without a scratch. Indeed, all that the seven men under Corporal Dawson could show in the way of blood stains was the wound on Big Bill's cheek, where he had been slightly creased by a bullet. It was so insignificant that Bailey never knew it was there until Danny called his attention to it. Then he wiped the blood away with his big callous hand and grinned.

"Well, what do you know about that?" he chuckled. "Never felt it."

In a short time, their work completed, the wiring parties, tired but happy, tumbled back over

the parapet once more and sought the shelter of the trenches. Then the machine guns gradually let up their spitting, and the steady firing of the guns on the ridge diminished, and things settled down to normal once more.

Mess was dealt out, too, hot kettles of stew, bread and marmalade being brought forward through the communication trenches by the men from the field kitchens which were hidden away somewhere back of the line in the network of underground abodes so recently wrenched from the Germans.

And after they had had quite enough to eat, Danny and the rest of the wiring crews, along with all the other men who could be spared, found sheltered nooks in dugouts, and machine gun emplacements and rolling up in their blankets sought to make up some of the sleep they had lost of late.

CHAPTER XII.

ABROAD AT NIGHT IN "NO MAN'S LAND."

In the gray light of dusk, Danny awoke, feeling very much better after a thoroughly sound sleep. Evening mess was just being brought in through the communication trenches by the kitchen orderlies, and since the men at the various periscopes along the trench line reported the Germans to be decidedly inactive, every one turned to for a good and much needed meal.

Mess tins were produced, and amid the rattle of these aluminum utensils and the knives and forks, the men settled themselves on the firing steps and waited patiently while the orderlies worked down the line from man to man serving out the grub.

Many a good natured quip and pun was handed back and forth from man to man, and more than one was passed at the expense of the orderlies who, in the opinion of the infantrymen, had picked a mighty comfortable job for the war.

"Sur-re," said Mickey O'Connor to one of the men from the field kitchen, meanwhile holding out his mess tin, "'tis me as was asleep whin I

enlisted. Why didn't I think o' t' kitchen br-rigade. 'Tis wan soft burrth ye got, mate, wid all t' grub yer wantin' an' nivver a worry 'bout t' Boches."

"Well, ye see it's a super-rior brand o' intilligence as is wanted fer t' cook squad," said the orderly, as he dipped out a goodly measure of baked beans onto Mickey's tin, "an' it's loikely they'd have tur-rned ye down, Mickey."

"Whist, go way with ye. 'Tis you as was diggin' holes in t' gr-round, whin I was goin' t' school," said Mickey derisively.

"Ha, ha, an' now, me foin bhoy, 'tis you who's diggin' t' holes in t' gr-round whilst I'm a-feedin' ye," was the retort from the orderly, as he moved on amid a road of laughter.

But he had not gone twenty paces, when with a groan he flung up his hands, staggered, and fell against his partner, who was helping him serve the beans. Incautiously he had stepped up onto the firing platform for a moment, just where a sand bag had been blown away, and a German sniper, with just the top of his head for a target, put a bullet through the Irishman's brain.

"Ah, tusch! T' poor feller!" cried Mickey, who was among the first to hurry to the side of the stricken man. "Bad luck to t' Boche who put an ind t' such a quick-spakin' Irishman."

Put an end to him he had. The orderly was

quite unconscious and ere stretcher bearers had taken charge of him he passed away, and every one was sadder for his passing, for he had been a favorite with the men of CC Company. Many a tin of beans went untouched, for somehow the men hardly had the heart to eat the meal he had so recently served to them.

Darkness came on quite fast, and ere long the Germans began sending up an occasional star shell, while far off to the right, a big searchlight began to rove the landscape, looking, looking, looking, for signs of things unusual. Sentries were posted along the firing platform where they were to spend hour after hour, with their heads above the parapet, staring out into the blackness of "No Man's Land," ready to give an alarm in case of a surprise attack. While other men went over the top and crawled out into the space between the lines to lie with their ears to the ground to listen for German sappers who might be digging a mine tunnel under them.

Danny and Mickey and Dawson were sitting together on the firing platform about this time, while Bailey with his back against the rear of the trench crouched near them, when Captain Ragan came from the communication trench that led to his dugout a short distance away.

"Dawson," he said to the Corporal, "I've got a hunch—just a hunch mind you—but it worries

me. Sort of a feeling that something is going to happen. We have our listening post out, but I want to get three or four more men out on patrol; just roving around you know. It's dangerous work."

"Well, Captain, here are four likely fellows," said Dawson.

"Fine," said Captain Ragan. "Take automatics and a couple of bombs each and go out and see what you can find. Be careful you don't mistake any of our listening posts for Germans, and look out for German patrols. What really worries me most is a trench raid. Those Boches are liable to try and pull one off to-night."

Here was a detail to make a chap's nerves tingle. The four fellows looked at each other in the darkness and shook hands all round, for it was just the kind of work they liked.

"Great stuff," said Bailey, "we'll do some scourin' around for old Daddy Ragan."

"You bet we will," said Danny enthusiastically.

"Good, I'm glad you fellows are willing. I knew you would be, and that's why I spoke as I did," said Dawson. Then he added, "Come on, we'll get our stuff. Then we'll pair off. Mickey you stick to me and Danny and Bailey can go together. How about it?"

"Fine," came the answer and the four potential scouts went down the trench to secure auto-

matic pistols and bombs, for their night's work.

Once again Danny went over the top. The four of them, one by one, mounted the short ladder over the parapet, and slowly, in single file, began to crawl out into the blackness, through one of the special lanes cut through the barbed wire entanglements for just such purposes.

Once beyond the wire barricade, they stopped. They knew the general location of their own listening posts on either hand, and they planned to crawl forward beyond them and approach as near to the German trenches as possible to do their scouting. A whispered conference was held and then they separated, Mickey and Dawson taking a course at an angle up the trench, while Danny and Bailey went in the opposite way. But first a signal was agreed upon by which if either party encountered the other in the darkness they would recognize each other and not think they had come upon Germans unaware.

Forward they crawled. It was hard, tedious, tiresome work. The ground was uneven and frozen solid. Sharp stones cut into their knees, tore their clothing and bruised and scraped their flesh. To Danny and to Bailey alike this crawling about was really painful. But they dared not make the slightest noise at their scouting for they knew that always there were German snipers

ready and waiting to fire in the direction of any suspicious noise.

On and on they crawled, dragging their bodies over the frozen earth. Sometimes they progressed in a crouching position, sometimes on hands and knees, and sometimes flat on their stomachs, dragging themselves forward inch by inch, when they heard sounds which suggested that a German patrol or raiding party might be close at hand.

And sometimes they were forced to lie quite still in the darkness, for now and then star shells were sent up from the German trenches which illuminated the landscape. Then, they knew, if they moved ever so slightly a machine gun would be turned on them. So they lay as if dead, and in the field scattered with the German dead of the morning raid, they were not discovered.

Three times Bailey and Danny encountered these German corpses. The first one Danny discovered. His hand came in contact with a heavily hobnailed boot. He drew back and tapped Bailey on the shoulder as a signal that he had located some one. Then they both moved forward together. But the moment they felt of the stiff cold flesh of the dead man they drew away, for they knew such gruesome remains could do them no harm.

Again they moved forward, slowly and cautiously. How far they had crawled, Danny could not tell. It seemed as if they had been out there for hours. Creeping as stealthily as Indians, they went on. Once they heard a tiny stone roll over the frozen ground and they flattened themselves down and laid motionless while they waited and listened. No shots came from the German trenches however, which suggested to them that perhaps German patrols were abroad too. It behooved them then to be careful. After a pause that seemed interminable they pushed on again.

And presently as they traveled Danny felt something scrape over the top of his head. Cautiously he put his hand up and felt the strands of a barbed wire entanglement. They were nearing the German trenches.

Danny reached over and grasped Bailey's hand, then with his own he raised the big fellow's hand and made him feel the wire too. And in that way, without a whisper being exchanged, he communicated to his partner the fact that they were very close to the German defenses.

They dared not risk going forward now, for ere long they would find themselves entrapped in the wires like rabbits in a snare. Instead they lay quite still and listened. And as they listened Danny could hear the soft thud, thud, of a pick

being plunged into the earth and occasionally the scrape of a shovel.

Here was something upon which Danny started his nimble brain to work. First he put his ear to the ground. The digging was not under the earth, he could tell that. Nor was it in the trenches ahead, for in that case, the earth exposed for a day or so to the cold air would be frozen hard and the picks and shovels would ring out instead of falling softly, as they did. Danny pondered. And while he pondered, Bailey caught the sound also and squeezed Danny's hand by way of warning.

Danny moved over and whispered in his ear, "They are digging and it's not in the trenches for it's soft ground they're digging into, not frozen earth. It's not under the ground either for I listened."

"It comes from the left, on a line with us," breathed Bailey.

Danny listened again, and discovered that Bailey was right.

"Come on," he tapped with his hands on Bailey's shoulder, in the signal language of trench raiders which they had learned back at the training camp, and then together they began crawling slowly in the direction of the soft digging. They had to move very, very cautiously now. They knew that the slightest sound would betray them,

and the Boches would turn their rifles loose on them. On they moved, scarcely breathing and without a sound. Inch by inch, foot by foot, yard by yard, they made painfully slow progress. And each time they stopped to listen, they could hear the thud of picks more distinctly.

The fates were with them for just as they were about to crawl forward again, the Germans sent up some star shells. And in the vivid light that lasted but a few moments Danny saw directly ahead of them and at the very edge of the German barbed wire entanglements, a big shell crater newly made, and so deep that the earth at the bottom was not frozen, and in it a half dozen German soldiers were plying picks and shovels, hard at work building a machine gun dugout or "pill box."

Danny gripped Bailey's shoulder. They were not ten yards from the deep pit, and if they had gone on as they were crawling before the flare went up they would assuredly have tumbled into it and right among the Germans.

Slowly they backed away, and Danny as he moved, stealthily drew one of his Mills bombs from the pocket of his tunic. Then when they had reached a safe distance he arose to his knees, made a close guess at the distance he was from the shell crater, drew the safety pin of the bomb,

and with easy poise swung his long pitching arm back and tossed the bomb.

Like lightning he dropped back flat on the ground beside Bailey again, for he knew that if the bomb did not land in the crater he and his big partner stood a likely chance of being killed by it. Breathlessly they waited. Danny never knew four seconds were so long!

Then a roar slit the air and dead ahead Danny saw a flash of light leap upward from the deep cone-shaped hole in the earth. The bomb had fallen into the crater.

"That settles their little machine gun dugout for this evening," he whispered to his big partner. Then, "Come on. There may be others."

There were others. An hour later, working on down the line they heard the same soft thudding of picks being plied in the soft earth of a newly made shell hole. This time they listened and estimated. And to be certain both of them threw bombs. And both, fortunately for the throwers, landed in the crater they were meant for, blowing the working party of Huns to eternity. And still later they found another crater which they bombed successfully. At their last exploit, several German snipers fired in their general direction, but the firing did not last long for the Boches were evidently afraid of injuring scouts or workmen of their own who evidently were in "No

Man's Land." That the Huns *were* abroad Danny and Bailey discovered later.

It was a profitable night's work, and in the small hours of the morning, they started to crawl slowly back toward their own trenches once more quite satisfied with what they had done.

But as they crawled forward Bailey, who was in the lead, encountered a steel shod foot again. Slowly he passed his hand up onto the leg. The flesh was yielding and under his fingers he could feel the beat of an artery. The man was alive!

"Who are you," he hissed as he drew himself up beside the prostrated man reaching his big hand toward the other's throat.

"Id iss all ride, frient," came the answer with an undeniable German accent.

With a grunt of contempt for such a poor effort to deceive him, Bailey lunged forward and grasped the German in his powerful hands. And Danny never realized what a terrible fight took place there in the darkness.

With not a word the two men went at each other, rolling over and over, punching, biting, kicking and clawing, and each seeking an advantage. Yet neither uttered a word. They fought in silence. And strangely enough not a shot rang out from either trench in spite of the fact that the watchers in both must have heard the scrap-

ing and tumbling about of the two men on the frozen earth. Danny guessed afterwards that with patrols out from both trenches, and both sides in that general vicinity, neither dared fire for fear of killing their own men.

So out there in the blackness of "No Man's Land" Bailey and the Boche fought it out, with Danny helplessly lying near by, not daring to close in himself for fear of injuring the wrong man in the mêlée. Bailey had tackled a hard problem in the big German scout, and as for the Boche, he knew he had some one to deal with when he closed in on the American. Each was strong, each a fighter, and each as courageous as a lion. Bailey forgetting about his revolver, sought only to close his vice-like grip about the German's throat, and the German, armed with an ugly knife, tried and tried to bury the blade in his antagonist.

But Bailey had thought of such possibilities and before the Boche could get in a clean stroke, he had seized the man's right hand, and with a terrible twist made him drop the dagger. Then armed alike with fists, teeth and feet they went at it.

Bailey brought his hammer-like hand down upon the face of the German, only to get a vicious kick in the stomach at the same moment. Again he punched and again the German kicked and

punched too. It was a regular rough and tumble, knock down and drag out fight after that.

Sometimes they were on their feet wrestling about seeking an advantage, and sometimes they were flat on the ground again, rolling over and over.

Then Danny heard a grunt of rage in the darkness, the impact of flesh against flesh, and then silence. And a few moments later the panting Bailey whispered hoarsely to him.

"Come on, Danny, it's all over with."

Danny made haste to crawl toward his partner to find Bailey, almost exhausted, lying flat on the ground.

"What is it—what—what—where is he?" queried Danny eagerly.

"He's over there, and I guess he's dead," whispered Bailey. "The dirty Hun bit me in the cheek and that was all I could stand. I just clipped him one under the jaw—a real one, and if it didn't kill him—then I'm through fightin'," hissed the enraged Bailey as they started to crawl toward their own trenches again.

"Crackey, but that was a close call," whispered Danny.

"Close nothin'," whispered the contemptuous Bailey, "I had the best of him all the time, even if he did have a knife. Wish I'd had him out in the open in the daylight and I'd a-pounded him

to a pulp." And Danny guessed right when he concluded that that must have been *some* fight out there in the darkness.

Getting back to the American trenches was no particularly easy job after that, for in the turmoil they had both lost their sense of direction. They were not exactly certain which way they should crawl to reach their own defenses.

Bailey, whose head still whirled from the encounter, and who was too angry to even think properly, left the guiding all to Danny, but that worthy was not so eager to shoulder the responsibility for he had not the remotest idea of where or in which direction the American trenches lay.

However, he concluded that one guess was as good as another, and after a moment's deliberation he started to crawl forward again. With Bailey close beside him and always in touch with him, they went on as best they could. But they were very cautious now for they were not eager to encounter other German scouts, or to blunder hopelessly into the Boches' barbed wire entanglements.

Slowly they moved forward peering ahead in the darkness. But not a familiar sight or sound could they locate. So far as knowing exactly where they were they might just as well have been out on the Desert of Sahara. All they did know was that danger lurked on every hand,

that the night was cold, and that slowly the hours were rolling by and ere long, if they did not discover their whereabouts, they would be caught out there in the open at dawn, and then they would be doomed to lie prone on the ground during the daylight hours hungry and thirsty and always with the possibility of being riddled with bullets from the German trenches, unless they feigned dead and lay absolutely still all day. Such prospects were terrible to think about, and spurred them on to crawl faster and search more diligently.

Danny's luminous wrist watch told him that it lacked yet two hours of dawn. In those two hours they would have to find their trenches, or they would be doomed to torturous punishment, and possibly death out there between the trenches.

On they crawled, peering about and hoping, always hoping. That they were lost both of them realized, but what the end of the night's adventures would be neither of them knew nor dared to guess at. They were making famous progress, on hands and knees however. Both of them had long since worn the woolen guards from their hands, and cut and bruised those members frightfully. And as for their knees, the cloth of their breeches and underwear was riddled to ribbons, and both were certain that great cuts had been

opened up in their flesh from contact with the hard ground. But on they struggled, always forward and always hoping soon to locate their position.

Then just when they were in utter despair, and when it lacked but an hour of dawn, there was a hiss and a sputter not twenty yards ahead of them, and a star shell shot aloft from the German trenches. Then another and another, the first they had seen in several hours.

Fearfully the two boys flattened themselves on the ground and lay motionless, and in those few seconds that the star shells burned, they realized that they had been crawling back toward the German trenches and that in a matter of minutes they would probably have reached the German barbed wire and revealed themselves to the Boches. Then they would have been shot or captured for their troubles.

Those star shells were a blessing, and after their light had faded away the two boys turned about and started on the long and tedious crawl back toward the American trenches.

Gray and golden dawn was streaking the eastern sky when they again reached the American entanglements. The whispered challenge of the watchers looking out over the top of the trenches were the sweetest words that Danny and

Bailey had ever heard, for it meant that they were among friends again. Eagerly they sought directions to the nearest lane through the entanglement and ere long they were tumbling over the top of their own trenches, right among the members of CC Company, with Cross Dawson and Mickey, much the worse for wear, eagerly waiting to greet them.

"It's Danny and Big Bill, praise be," exclaimed Mickey, when he viewed them in the gathering light of dawn; "sur-re ye made a noight ave it. We were thinkin' ye'd nivver be back."

"Well we came mighty near never coming back at that," assured Danny, and he proceeded to relate snatches of their adventures to eager listeners, while he waited for word that Captain Ragan would see them.

"Aw ye lucky spalpeens," exclaimed Mickey, "sure we should all have stuck togither and gone wid ye. 'Tis Dawson an' me who got lift. We saw nothin', heard nothin', an' wore out our pants an' knee-knuckles fer our tr-roubles. All's we did was t' throw a few bombs into t' Boches trinches jist fer luck and bedads we near got shot fer it."

"Well, we had a lot of fun, but we're dog-tired and as soon as we report we crawl into our blankets, don't we, Bill?"

"Bet your boots we do," said Bailey, whose

tired and haggard expression told plainly that the adventures of the night and the added strain of a life and death fight in the darkness had told on him.

CHAPTER XIII.

OVER THE TOP.

Danny and Big Bill awoke six hours later into a world that seemed to rock back and forth and reel about under the most terrific explosion ever heard. The din was maddening. From every quarter came the loud-mouthed, ear-splitting detonations of guns, guns, guns. From one end of the ridge to the other behind the American trenches the 75's were chorusing forth their deadly anthem unceasingly. It was a steady thunder, that seemed to shake the very foundations of the earth, and the two adventurers of the night before turned out of their dugout and came up to the light of the trenches, wondering what was happening.

But what was their surprise to see the rest of the company scattered about the trenches in the most unconcerned attitude possible. In sheltered places card games were being played, and here and there, crowded close under the parapet men sat smoking. Cross Dawson and Mickey, who had left the dugout a half hour before, were close at hand eating a cold, belated breakfast, while

they guarded two other mess tins, also filled with grub, which Danny and Bailey recognized as theirs.

"Ha, here ye are. 'Tis a good thing ye decided to wake up whin ye did, or we'd have started on your share too," cried Mickey with a grin.

"Crackey, what's coming off?" asked Danny with a puzzled expression.

"Why the Boches' heads are coming off I guess from the sound of things," said Dawson. Then he added, "the guns have been at it since seven o'clock this morning so they tell me. They are softening up the German trenches for our attack."

"Attack! Are we going over the top?" asked Danny.

"We are that, but whin, we don't know," said Mickey.

"Well, I'm going to sharpen up me bayonet," said Big Bill, scooping up a fork full of beans and making them disappear. Then he added, "It's the one thing I want to do more than anything else. How about you, Corporal? Just give us one crack at real fighting with those Huns and I'll die happy."

"Oh, I'll be there when the whistle blows," said Dawson.

But the question of when they were to attack was one that no one could answer apparently: not even Captain Ragan.

That the gun chorus on the ridge was the forerunner of an attack that was certain. Tons upon tons of shells were being hurled into the German trenches and behind their lines, in an effort to "soften" them up preparatory to an attack by the Yankees. But how long the softening process was to continue was beyond any one's ken. Hour after hour the great thundering grumble kept up. Morning wore into afternoon and afternoon into evening.

The night sky was alight with the flashes of the guns and the glare of exploding shells, and Danny and the rest turned in and were sung to sleep by the deadly chorus. And they awoke to it the next morning too. Unceasingly those exploding projectiles were being hurled into the German position until the ground was ploughed up and covered over again a hundred times. And still the shells kept dropping.

By the second day of the terrific bombardment every one had become used to the noise. Their senses seemed dulled to that particular thing, and they went about their work or their diversions exactly as if there were no guns within hearing distance. The trenches were cleaned and parapets rebuilt where German shells had knocked down occasional sand bags or blown away part of the wall. Detachments in certain sections operated trench mortars which hurled heavy

trench bombs in the direction of the Boches, thus adding to the din. Snipers, in sheltered positions, kept a constant watch-out for an unwary German head of which there were strangely few, and in the dugouts at various places along the trench line, machine guns and automatic rifles kept up a constant rattle, spraying the German trench line with a deadly hail.

Corporal Dawson, one of the best marksmen in the company, was on duty the greater part of the time, lying behind a barricade of sand bags, and peering out across "No Man's Land," his rifle always ready. But as for Danny, Bailey and Mickey there was not much that they could do except to lie low and watch and wait, for while they were all good shots they had not yet qualified as experts in the sniper's class.

Twice Danny and Mickey went over to a machine gun dugout where they knew several fellows, members of the "Suicide Club" as the machine gun company was called, and here they watched with interest the operation of those quick-firing, death-dealing machines. Indeed, he persuaded Buster O'Reilly, one of the gunners, to allow him to operate the weapon for a few moments. Picking out for a target a mound of earth to the left of the German line he blazed away. O'Reilly told him that a German machine gun was hidden there, and Danny let fly, with

what result he did not know. Certain it was that he did not silence the machine gun, for in answer to his fusillade, there came back a hail of bullets that spattered about the dugout and kicked up a whirl of dust from the hard frozen ground.

As another diversion during the terrific bombardment, the three fellows took the opportunity to mend torn and ragged breeches, shirts and tunics. Five days in the trenches along with their night activities had told on their wearing apparel. They were dirty and ragged, and from the trenches so lately occupied by filthy Boches, they had acquired certain companions in the form of "cooties" which proved to be uncomfortable bed fellows. Cootie hunts were common, when it was not too cold to take off their shirts and locate the elusive vermin.

Meanwhile the constant hammer-hammer-hammer was being kept up by the belching guns hidden behind the lines. The boys were certain that the German position must be a veritable shamble, pounded into chaos and confusion by the never-ceasing rain of shells. But little did they suspect how well the Germans had dug themselves in and how many there would be left to face them when they made their charge, in spite of the fact that thousands had been killed by the bombardment.

Day after day wore on until it seemed to the

men as if they were never going to be called for.

Then on the evening of the fifth day of the heavy bombardment, word was passed along the line that at five o'clock next morning they would go over the top.

Every pulse beat quicker when this news came, every watch was set alike, every rifle made ready, every bayonet polished, every belt filled with ammunition, and in the last few minutes before turning in, every dugout where lights were permitted, was crowded with men in khaki scribbling farewell notes to those at home, which were to be sent out by the orderlies who would come into the trench with breakfast at four.

Then with high hopes, and never a thought that this might be the last evening that they were to live, the men rolled up in their blankets, and with the lonesome sentries gazing over the parapets, went to sleep in spite of the din and the prospects of the morning.

It must be confessed that it took Danny a little time to induce slumber, for thoughts of the events of the morrow made him wonder just how he was going to conduct himself. He had been over the top at night under the cover of darkness, and he had taken some chances. But they were as nothing to this new adventure. He wondered how he would feel when he went over that ladder and gained the ground in broad day-

light, knowing that a hundred yards away blood-thirsty Boches were hiding in their trenches, their rifles trained on him and their bayonets fixed to give him battle.

Would he flunk? Would his nerve fail him? He had a sort of a vacant feeling in the pit of his stomach as he thought of it all. He wondered if he could steel himself to go forward. He wondered how he would face the ordeal of fire that was meant for him in the morning. And while he wondered he somehow fell asleep, to dream of charging Boches with ugly rage-distorted faces who sought constantly to plunge long bayonets through him.

Every one awoke at four o'clock. There was no need of whistles or calls to arouse them. Subconsciously all night long their brains had registered that they must awaken at four, and they did, ready for anything.

In the pitch-darkness, they gathered up their mess tins and went out into the trench, and soon through the communicating ways came the kitchen orderlies with their morning meal, and the extra rations which they were to take along with them when they went over the top.

Never before had a meal tasted so good, nor had a piping-hot cup of coffee meant so much to him as it did on that frosty morning. And while he sat there on the firing step drinking and eat-

ing with the rest of the Wurra-wurra Squad close at hand, he felt a soft, downy wetness descending upon that part of his face that was not protected by his knitted helmet, and ere long the bottom of the trench showed white patches here and there, and he knew that they were soon to make their charge through a flurry of snow.

Still the fine flakes kept on falling, and still the luminous minute hand on his wrist watch kept slowly moving forward. Four-thirty now, his meal was finished, his mess kit cleaned as best he could clean it, folded together and slung in its accustomed place.

Quarter to five, fifteen minutes more and they would start. The scaling ladders were at the parapet. Danny fidgeted with the straps that held his pack and blankets on his shoulder. This waiting was getting on his nerves.

Ten minutes more. Dawn seemed to linger. Just the faintest suggestion of gray light filled the trenches through which he could see the faces of the men about him. They looked ghastly and weird; they looked pale and wan. He wondered if his face looked the same.

Five minutes more! Hobnailed boots scraped nervously over the frozen earth and made a rasping sound. Every one was standing, some were moving nearer the ladders.

Three minutes more. Men were ascending the

first rungs of the ladders. Danny noted that the first man on his ladder was a grizzly, old, regular Army Sergeant, who had been recently transferred to his company. He had been over the top before.

Two minutes more, Danny's throat was dry. He felt a peculiar all-gone feeling in his stomach. Indeed it seemed as if his stomach had left him entirely. He had two legs and a head and that was all. He had felt that way before when he was young at the pitching game, and he was waiting to enter the box in a big contest.

One minute more. Captain Ragan had his eyes on the dial of his watch and his whistle to his lips. Danny felt of the clutch of his bayonet and examined the magazine of his rifle. There were six cartridges in there ready for use. He wondered vaguely how many he would be able to use before he was killed.

Thirty seconds more. Captain Ragan fidgeted, took his whistle out of his mouth, licked his lips, then said crisply, "Don't forget to yell like demons. Ready now!"

"Go! Over the top with you, and God bless you!"

The whistle sounded, the Sergeant bounded up the ladder, Captain Ragan after him, and then one by one coolly and calmly, but very swiftly the men started up the scores of ladders, and

presently regular streams of men were pouring over the parapet like so many ants and hurrying through the lanes cut in the barbed wire.

The faint gray light still lingered and the air was thick with snow particles as the men hurried forward and formed an almost orderly line in front of the barbed wire, with Captain Ragan in advance. But they never paused a moment. At quick time they went forward, and with their first step things began to happen.

Back beyond their trenches the barrage fires started in earnest and the cannonade was terrific. Line upon line of shells burst before them and beyond into the German trenches, and beyond that to the rear of the German's position.

And with a curious and terrifying sound that resembled the ripping and tearing of heavy canvas, the Germans opened up to repel the attack.

"Yell," cried Captain Ragan. "Yell. Put some pep into it."

The roaring voice of Big Bill Bailey was raised in a tremendous war cry.

"Wurra-wurra—run yuh Boches—we're after ye," he cried, and along the line of advancing men, rang out a battle cry that stirred every man and made him leap forward eager to be at the Huns.

Out across "No Man's Land," they arrived charging and yelling savagely. Danny to this

day remembers little of the trip. It seemed to him as if he floated along. The heavy rifle, his pack, his overcoat meant nothing. He seemed as fleet as a deer, as on he plunged shoulder to shoulder with Big Bill and Mickey, all yelling. He shrieked at the top of his lungs too, and brandished his bayonet savagely. Hatred and anger surged within him. Thoughts of danger never occurred to him. All he wanted to see were the Boches before him and on he plunged.

He heard the hiss of the bullets over his head or the thud as they struck the ground. One hit his bayonet scabbard at his side and cut it completely in two. One pierced the skirt of his overcoat. He felt it jerk at his side as if he had caught his coat on some barbed wire. But on he plunged. He saw men fall. He saw Captain Ragan stagger and go down. He wondered in that fleeting moment if the officer were killed. But the next instant, the commander was on his feet again, running and yelling too, and blazing away with his automatic. Danny wanted to shoot also, but he could see nothing to shoot at. Shells burst about him, and once a bomb hurled from somewhere exploded right in the midst of the charging men. Danny saw the line waver and close up. He went down! Tripped, plunged headlong into a shell hole and staggered up the

next moment to race forward to his place beside the savagely yelling Big Bill.

Then they met the Boches!

Through an area, shell-torn and strewn with what remained of the German barbed wire entanglements uprooted and scattered about, plunged the Yankees. No longer were they a steadily advancing line. They were just madly fighting groups who leapt into the deep holes and shattered dugouts, so lately German trenches. And there waiting stubbornly were the Huns, faces set and grim, haggard bloodshot eyes and ugly leering mouths, encrusted with mud and filth and shrouded in bristling beards. They had been confined to their dugouts for days and had suffered agonies under the American artillery fire.

With a wild shriek of triumph Big Bill leapt forward, singling out the nearest Boche, a big broad chested savage looking fellow. Then followed a clash and the ring of steel against steel, and a grunt that ended in a loud moan as the wild Yankee beat back the Hun's guard and slashed him savagely with his bayonet. Down went the German and Bailey leapt toward the next man. But Danny had time to observe no more. Another Boche larger than the one whom Bailey had attacked closed in on him with a roar of guttural sounds. Danny planted his feet firmly

and was on guard in a moment. The German lunged toward his throat with that glittering bayonet, Danny parried the stroke with an upward sweep of his rifle, then with all his force he jammed the butt of his gun into the face of the Hun. He heard the impact and the breaking of bones. The German went down heavily.

To his left, Mickey was engaged in mortal combat with two brutish Teutons. Danny sprang to his side and relieved him of one of his opponents. Side by side the two Americans fought, countering and parrying with the Huns. But they were as good with the bayonets as were the Americans, and for a few seconds Danny and Mickey had their hands full. Suddenly with an enraged cry one of the Germans plunged for Danny. The Yankee side-stepped and backed away a little, only to trip over the uneven earth and go down.

On his back the Hun had him at a disadvantage. The Boche knew it, and jumped forward to plunge his bayonet through the young American. Danny saw his towering form, his wicked bloodshot eyes and ugly rage-distorted face leaning over him. His rifle was held aloft just an instant before he plunged the bayonet. But in that instant Danny raised his own rifle in one hand as lightly as if it had been a revolver and pointing it full at the Hun's chest pulled the trigger. Danny saw the sudden change of ex-

pression as his rifle flashed; saw the German grip at his chest and fall, and on the same instant Danny received a blow in the mouth that knocked out both his front teeth and almost made him unconscious. His rifle held so lightly had kicked and the stock struck him in the face.

But Danny was on his feet in a moment though covered with blood from his badly cut lip and mouth. Mickey had downed his man now, but not, however, without receiving vicious slashes across the cheek himself. There he was, blood streaming from his wound, yet he was fighting valiantly in the thick of things. All about them men were fighting. Some sparring and parrying with bayonets, and some with rifles flung aside hard at it with fists. The din of the battle, the cries and shrieks of men gone mad sounded on every hand, along with the pop-pop-popping of rifles and the ripping tearing sound made by the machine gunners who were covering the flanks of the Americans and holding off Huns from other trenches.

On they fought, swaying backward and forward, but always the German gave ground; gave it reluctantly, but still they fell back. Then suddenly several of them detached themselves from the turmoil and with wild cries began to flee to the rear. Close at hand Danny saw Big Bill covered with blood and breathing hard with the

excitement of it all. He had just downed another Boche and was unengaged when he saw the three men run.

"Oh, no you don't," he shrieked, and up leapt his rifle. First one and then another of the fleeing Germans tumbled. And as he stood thus a Hun closed in on him and struck his rifle aside. Big Bill swung around in anger, wrenched the German's gun from his grasp and clubbed it for a swing at the Boche's head. The startled Hun could hardly realize that the man possessed but human strength, so easily had he torn the rifle from his hands. With a shriek of "Kamerad" he sank to his knees, pleading with Big Bill not to dash out his brains, and Bailey stopped short in his swing and regarded the German contemptuously.

"Ah, you quitter," he yelled, and casting the German's rifle aside in contempt he picked up his own and started toward a mass of men who were fighting nearby.

Like a flash the German leapt after his rifle and swinging about was on the point of killing the man who had just spared his life, when Danny, who had seen the little drama at close quarters, laid the treacherous German low with a crushing blow on the head.

And thus they fought, the Huns desperately to retain that strip of muddy, shell-harrowed ground

and the Yankees to possess it. But it was apparent soon after the attack was well under way who would win. Nothing could stand up under the terrific fighting ability of the Americans. Soon the Huns were on the defense entirely and every time one or two got an opportunity to run away from the turmoil they broke. Soon they were running by the dozens and those who were hopelessly mixed up in the turmoil, seeing their comrades flee, quickly surrendered.

The hand to hand fighting became a pursuit race presently. As the Germans ran, agile Yankees detached themselves from the fighting group and ran after them. Danny gave chase with the rest and before long he found himself running over one abandoned trench after another. Other Americans followed him and soon the entire battalion was moving forward, the first barrier of Huns beaten hopelessly, and nothing remaining in their way to take more and more territory. On they raced, and if it had not been for the cries and whistling of officers they would doubtless have pursued the Germans right on through the deadly American barrage fire which was falling half a mile back of the trenches and barring the way for reinforcements for the Huns.

Slowly the Americans came back, most of them blood covered but enthusiastic, and many of

them driving before them hopeless looking Huns whom they had taken prisoners. Danny was one of these. He had given quarters to a young German, who was hardly any older than himself. Danny walked proudly behind him, his fixed bayonet but a few inches from the young Hun's back.

Already entrenchment tools were being brought up, and the Americans were frantically digging themselves in and rebuilding the German trenches as best they could when Danny came back.

Under a prisoners' guard, Danny's captive was marched to the rear, and Danny with the rest of the men of CC Company, or all that was left of them for they had suffered not a little in the attack, began to dig with pick and shovel like the rest, and all the time as they worked, a perfect curtain of American shells was flung across the landscape preventing a possible counter attack by German reinforcements that lay waiting in the rear.

Danny worked with the rest and as he worked he took account of things. There was Bailey unwounded, but covered with gore from the men he had downed. There was Mickey too, still alive but looking quite hideous with an ugly wound in his cheek. Dawson was still alive, and apparently little the worse for wear save a rapidly swelling eye that threatened to be seriously black

ere long. But there were many faces Danny knew that were missing. The Americans had paid for their victory in blood, but at that their losses were nothing to the hundreds of Germans whom he saw scattered about the field, which was now a mass of mud where the light snow of the morning, and the tramp of many feet had softened the ground.

It had ceased snowing now, and the sun was trying to peep out from behind the leaded clouds that still overhung the heavens. Danny out of curiosity looked at his watch and was surprised to find that it was but half past seven. They had been battling but a few hours. To Danny it seemed as if they had been fighting most of the day.

Overcoats were flung aside now, as were packs and even rifles, and every one devoted himself to digging out the trenches, cleaning out battered down machine gun dugouts, and running communication trenches back through what had once been "No Man's Land," but what was now American territory. Like veritable ground moles the men dug these trenches. To be sure the ground was hard but the deep furrows that had once been German trenches formed good foundations for the new trenches of the Yankees, and in a surprisingly short time things began to

look as orderly as front line trenches ever can look.

Barbed wire entanglements were thrown up by the infantrymen and the engineers who came forward to lend a hand. German dead were cleared away from the immediate vicinity, and out there on the open field still swept by bullets from German machine guns far beyond, the American stretcher bearers, "body snatchers" as the men called them, were gathering up the wounded. Danny caught sight of the regimental Chaplain there too, who in spite of the perils of the situation was administering to the stricken men, Germans and Americans alike.

Hour after hour they worked until far into the night. Then while some remained at work others snatched a few hours sleep, turned out and went at it again. And by daylight the next morning the trenches were tenable again and communications were established with the rear whereby provisions and ammunition could be brought up.

Twice during the early hours of the morning the Germans attempted a counter attack. Then every shovel and pick was cast aside and rifles substituted. But thanks to the heavy American barrage fire which was maintained constantly and thanks to the unerring marksmanship of the men of the Fighting Fifth, the Huns fared but

poorly and never came very close to the trenches from which they had so recently been driven.

It was a tired and very much disheveled and bedraggled looking company that cast side entrenching tools late the following afternoon and crawled into their blankets. They had had nearly thirty-six hours of ceaseless work. A few had been able to catch an hour or two of sleep, but that was all. Every one felt like crawling into their blankets. Some of them did, and Danny was among them. But before he dropped off to sleep the good news reached him that they were to be relieved that night by the Regulars who, after a brief rest behind the lines, were ready to take over the trenches won by Fighting Fifth.

CHAPTER XIV.

IN THE BILLET.

Relief was a welcome word to Danny and to Mickey, Big Bill and Dawson, and every other member of CC Company, for in spite of the fact that they always wanted to be in the thick of things, they felt that if they could spend a few days in rest billet they would be better fitted to take a hand in the fighting again. Indeed they were well played out and eagerly awaited the coming of the Regulars.

Danny woke up in time to see the first of the relief coming in. They were a fine burly lot of fighters with clean-cut American faces, big chests and broad shoulders. They were of the detachment who first helped to establish an American sector in the serpentine battle line that wound across the landscape of Europe, and what a cheer went up through the gathering dusk as they worked their way in through the communication trenches and crowded past the defenders of the front line trenches.

"Well, you pushed her out a little further, eh, boys?" said one of the Regulars to Danny and

Mickey, as he crowded past and took his place on the firing steps.

"You bet we did, and now we'll leave the dirty work to you fellows," said Danny, remembering the greeting he and his chums received when they first came into the front line trenches scarcely more than a week ago.

"Dirty work is our middle name. These trenches will be a mile behind the first line when you kids get back," said a grizzly old Sergeant, as he passed.

"Hope so, and wish you luck at it," said Danny, as they received the signal to leave their places and enter the communication trenches.

It was with a light heart that they all bade adieu to the first line trenches. They had had enough for the present, and they were willing to take a few days off in rest billet, beyond the range of shells and German snipers.

Back they traveled, to their old line of trenches now held by reserves, and back through the network of old German trenches, to the "dead line" where they emerged from their burrows like rabbits from a warren, and formed in squads once more.

Then to the swinging melody of dozens of mouth organs and hundreds of young voices raised in a harmonious trench song, they swung on through the night over roads crowded with

moving troops, motor lorries and ambulances. They were bound for rest billet and had every reason to be happy.

On they tramped hour after hour, passing through the little village where they had impatiently waited in reserve not two weeks before. Then through other villages, and still more until presently they arrived on the outskirts of a comparatively big town. Here by the light of lanterns, and pocket flash lamps, and after much disorder and confusion on the part of the tired men, they were shown to their billets, which were for the most part old barns, vacated houses, and now and then an improvised barrack hastily put together.

You may be sure the men did not pause for sight-seeing at that hour. Blankets were unrolled as quickly as possible and before many minutes had passed the Fighting Fifth or what was left of it was snoring peacefully and not even dreaming of front line trenches.

Rest billet was a new experience to these Americans, but it did not take them long to understand that it was a time to be made the most of and thoroughly enjoyed. As little routine work as possible was done, and all ceremonies, save reveille and retreat and the few other necessary military functions, were disposed of, and passes and briefs furloughs were handed out as

frequently as was practical under the circumstances.

But there was a host of things to do nevertheless. Clothing needed to be mended badly, buttons sewed on here and there, and in many cases new outfits had to be provided, for the men's uniforms had had hard usage in the trenches.

However there was plenty of opportunity for the men to go visiting about and roaming around to see the city and the country nearby and not a few of the Yankees took advantage of the fact. Danny and Mickey, Big Bill and Cross Dawson, received a pass the second day in billet, and before they contemplated anything else they all agreed that the first thing they would do would be to find the best restaurant in town and have a real meal.

The town which in peace times was known as St. C——, but which on military maps was designated by numbers and figures, proved to be a rather important city, in the heart of the territory turned over to the Americans. As were all the towns in that zone, this one was busy, and waxing fat and rich on the gold that the Yankee troops poured into their waiting cash drawers. Beyond the city was a huge American training camp which within the week had received thousands of khaki-clad men from over the seas, and

new contingents going into training preliminary to taking a place at the front.

And as a result of this, thousands of Americans roamed the streets of the big town, and these with the hundreds of motor trucks and ambulances kept the place in a constant turmoil day and night.

Danny and his three chums found a restaurant after a time. They looked up the very best one in town, and soon they found themselves sitting at a table with clean linen before them and silver knives and forks to eat with; a real treat, which they knew they would have to pay for dearly, but which they did not begrudge at all.

That meal was a real one and long to be remembered by all four. They ate and ate and ate until they were stuffed so full that they felt uncomfortable. Of course there was not much variety to the menu the waiter presented, and the boys with their "trench French" which was little better than no knowledge of French at all could not make anything out of it. But the waiter had a smattering of English, and between them all they made him understand what they wanted. They did try to order by menu first, but when they discovered that they had asked for three different kinds of cheese, they gave it up and just yelled "eats, and lots of 'em," and settled back to await the arrival of the first dish.

The waiter was quite human and understood exactly what hungry Americans preferred. The soup was delicious, and the meat, though they could not name it, was beyond description or at least it tasted so to the hungry fellows; then came salads, and dainty crackers, cake and cheese, and delightful French pastry, for the manager of the restaurant seemed quite willing to go deep into his larder for them in spite of the fact that food was not the easiest thing to get in France. The whole meal was topped off by a cup of rich, steaming coffee and the boys were thoroughly happy.

And while they sat there quite contented, two fellows in khaki came swaggering into the place. Danny looked at them closely, and for a moment he could scarcely believe his eyes. He watched them as they moved over toward another table, then raising his voice in the quietness of the restaurant, he spoke to Dawson, quite loud enough for the newcomers to hear.

"Say, I wonder who those fellows are over there? Look at the swagger on 'em. Huh, they think they are a lot."

Both of the new arrivals swung around, quite angry. But their anger turned to a whoop of joy as they beheld Danny.

"Wow, you roarin' old Irishman," cried Ray Barnes of the Artillery, rushing across the restaurant, "where—how—say, who gave you a

punch in the mouth?" He was staring at Danny's swollen lips and the vacant space where his front teeth had been.

"Yah, it's Danny an' he's been fighting again," cried the other fellow who was none other than Bud Grant.

"Right-o, I've been fighting again," said Danny with a smile that looked grotesque because of his swollen mouth. "But I've been fighting Boches. Ha, ha, guess that'll take some of the lugs out of you rookies. You come swaggerin' in here as if you owned the whole war, and I'll bet you haven't even seen a real trench yet. Go 'way. I'm your better by far. Take off your hats to the four of us. We're veterans."

"Aw quit your joshing. Honest now have you been in the trenches? You sure look it, but Danny you used to be an awful fakir sometimes."

"Well look at my side partner here, Mickey." Danny pointed to the strips of plaster that hid the bayonet wound on Mickey's cheek, by way of confirming his statement.

"Well I'd believe him before I'd believe you, because I've never met him before," said Bud meaningly and Danny made haste to introduce his friends.

Then there followed an interesting exchange of experiences, in which the four men from the Wurra-wurra Squad were the heroes in the eyes

of Bud and Ray. They heard the accounts of action in the first line trenches with quickening pulse and the story of the attack, which had so recently occurred held them spell bound.

Then when Danny and Mickey, Big Bill and Dawson, had quit their swaggering, so to speak, Bud and Ray explained their presence. It seems that they were members of the most recent contingent of the National Guard to be shipped abroad, having arrived in France and gone into training, on the outskirts of St. C——, but a little while before. To-day was the first that the boys had been able to get a pass into the town, and they were making the best of it.

Ray, it seems, after that memorable meeting of the Sphinx Club, made haste to join the First Artillery Regiment, while Bud hurried his enlistment in the Signal Corps, but so far neither outfit had seen little more than training service in a big southern camp in America, and the few days training since their arrival in France. Both were eager to get closer to the boom of the big guns and said as much.

They did have news from America, however, which Danny and the rest were hungry for. They told of the drafting of a half million men and the contemplated calling of another draft of a like number for the big National Army. They told of the huge cantonments that had been

erected in the different sections of the country, all so large as to be veritable cities with thousands of barracks, buildings and accommodations for 30,000 or 40,000 men each. They told of the second big Liberty Loan, which had been raised to finance the war, and they told of the fine work of the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross, and the Y. M. C. A. in providing comforts for the soldiers, all of which news the boys from the trenches drank in eagerly.

It was far into the afternoon when the party broke up, much to the distress of the waiter, until that worthy was generously tipped by way of making up for the patronage he had lost through having his table occupied most of the day.

The boys parted with the assurance that they would look each other up again, and the four from the Fighting Fifth promised to run out to the training camp in a day or so, seeing that they were to remain in rest billet a week or longer as they thought. They little knew, however, how brief their time at St. C—— was to be.

Indeed, upon their return to their billet for retreat that evening, they perceived that something unusual was about to happen, for order went forth that no more passes were to be issued and that the men should hold themselves in readiness to move at any moment.

And the next morning at reveille their rest

period came to an abrupt end, for word came down from headquarters that they were to be ready to move at eight o'clock that morning. No one knew exactly where they were to move to, or whether they were going back to the trenches again or in the opposite direction. All hoped, however, that the first location would be their objective. And such it proved to be.

CHAPTER XV.

BACK TO THE TRENCHES.

Leaden clouds were hanging low over St. C—— and there was a feeling of snow in the air when the Fighting Fifth received the command to move forward.

Through the town swung the long line of khaki to the cheers of *"Vive Amerika"* from thousands of shop keepers and dwellers of the interesting French community, to whom the tramp, tramp, tramp of the Allies' soldiers meant so much.

Whither they were bound no one knew. All that they could gather was that they were traveling toward the northwest, which was in the direction of the front line trenches, but not toward the same sector they had quitted a few days before. They traveled over different roads than those by which they came, for even though they had come in by night, Danny and the rest were quick to recognize the difference in the roadside landscape. Then, too, the thoroughfare along which they marched gave every evidence of having been much used in the past for deep ruts were

worn in the one time even surface, and now and then they found places where motor transports had been mired or field batteries over-turned, smashing fences or digging up huge, raw looking gouges in the gray earth.

And as they tramped forward to the rythmic chant and whistled tunes of the men, they felt in fine fettle for another tour of duty despite the fact that they had only been out of the trenches better than three days.

The leaden clouds that had forecasted snow, began soon to make good their promise with a vengeance. Inside of an hour a heavy, downy blanket of wet clinging snow began to fall, and Danny will never forget as long as he lives the picture that the long line of overcoated figures made swinging forward through the bespeckled landscape, the clinging snow sticking in great blotches to their hats and shoulders.

But the snow, while it added greatly to the picture of marching men, did not at all add to their comforts. The sticky, downy flakes, churning under thousands of marching feet, made the rutted road a muddy, soggy highway, and soon the men found it difficult to stick to their swinging marching stride for they were slipping and sliding about.

The passing motor trucks of the transportation trains began to give indications of the difficulties

that the snow storm was bringing upon them, too, for they came sloshing by, sometimes hub deep in mud, and skidding and twisting periously at every turn. Three times the marching column found one of these ungainly vehicles hopelessly mired by the roadside, and at the suggestion of the officers every one turned to and hundreds of sturdy shoulders helped the big iron and steel animal out of its difficulties and on its way.

Once the swinging column was turned out of the road to go 'round, what at first, through the snow storm, looked to Danny like a giant mastodon. It proved, however, on closer inspection to be one of the much talked of British tanks, a huge elephant-like affair of steel, bristling with guns, and with huge flat caterpillar feet. Even this big war machine, capable of going anywhere and finding traction in the softest or most uneven ground, was having difficulties traveling the road.

This tank suggested the possible destination of the Fighting Fifth, and many were the speculations as to the possibilities of their backing up the British first line troops in the sector held by them. But while this was a pretty good guess it was not exactly true. The fact was that the Americans were about to extend their sector, actually taking over a portion of the trenches held by the British, so that the Tommies could

be transferred to another section of their own line, where huge masses of troops were being congregated for an attack.

On and on marched the Yankees, pausing now and then to rest a while, and at noon and late in the afternoon to take hasty meals of steaming food that was cooked in rolling field kitchens and served along the line of march.

Many French towns of varying sizes were passed through, and all were hung with a soggy white mantle of snow. Only on the roofs, in the trees and shrubs and untrampled fields would the soft snow lie long. In the roadways, where vehicles and men tramped it down and churned it over and over, it became a part of the sea of dark brown mud. Danny wondered how it would be out there in the first line trenches, where he hoped they were bound for.

Night came on and still it snowed, and through the mistiness of the storm, the Yankees could vaguely see, far ahead, the flashing lights of battle; the star shells and the roving searchlights and the quick, sharp flashes of the heavy guns secreted far back of the first line hurling heavy, highly explosive shells for miles into German territory. And through the blanket of snowflakes the boom, boom, boom, sounded soft and muffled in spite of the fact that they were not

more than five or six miles from the first line trenches.

Rest was called in a tiny and very much crowded French town at about eight o'clock in the evening. Tommies and American soldiers were everywhere, with here and there a liberal sprinkling of French Poilus. All were moving in opposite directions and evidently making room for the Yankee fighters who were coming up to take over the new sector.

Cheer after cheer was raised when the Fighting Fifth and the other American units that followed, came into the town, and during the time the men were at ease some interesting groups of Tommies, French, American and Canadians, gathered at various points, to swap cigarettes and tobacco and exchange yarns, some of which were nothing short of weird in their grimness.

That they were not far back of the dead line was apparent, for occasionally shells would fall with a whizz and a bang into open field, but a half mile short of the town. So long as none of them entered the town, however, why worry? That was the attitude of the men, Tommies, Poilus and Yankees alike, for all of them were veterans of trench warfare, and Danny felt mighty proud of the fact that he did not blink or even turn his head when such things happened.

He was as much of a trained fighter as the rest of them.

At ten o'clock, came word to move forward. The snow had turned to a cold, drizzling rain by that time, making things even more uncomfortable for the boys in khaki. Rubber slickers were donned now, and the campaign hats gave way to the trench helmets, for in a few minutes the men were to enter the fighting zone once more.

Away they marched, slipping and sliding over mud-covered roads, and wet to the knees with water and muck. It was decidedly unpleasant and chilly and cold, but what of it? It was all in the game of soldiering and even in his discomforts Danny was quite happy, to be once again going toward the trenches. He little knew what misfortunes lurked out there in the fighting zone for himself and his friends, or what hardships he had yet to live through.

Soon they were traveling the shambles immediately behind the trenches, where occasional shells were falling, and where the ground had been churned into a veritable marsh by marching men and projectiles that tore the earth asunder. After a journey that was more wading than marching, the communication trenches were encountered and at this point the men began to disappear underground once more. Everywhere

were Tommies, hundreds of them lining the trenches, crowding past the incoming Americans, exchanging friendly greetings and bandying back and forth in trench slang.

"I 'opes ye give t' blighters a 'ot time," said one of the Tommies, in broad cockney to Danny.

"That's what we always give 'em," assured Danny, whereupon the Tommy said "Right-o," and passed on.

"Ah, but you'll not swank about s'much after ye been in there a while," said another Tommie, who was covered with mud from head to foot. "Hit's a orful plice till 'e git used t' hit."

All of which proved quite true when Danny and his chums got a glimpse of the first line defenses.

They were deep and wide, and for the most part well drained, and with many a dugout sunken back into the parados, but for all that the snow and rain had made it little more than a huge mud filled ditch and the Yankees slopped around in soft ooze a foot deep, whenever they stepped off the firing platform.

"Ah, well," said Mickey, "t' be under this muck instid o' on top o' it would be worse, so cheer up, me hearties."

They were all cheered up, however, in spite of the fact that they were wet through. Guards were quickly posted and stations appointed, and

then those who did not have to stand up and gaze out at "No Man's Land" thanked their lucky stars that the barbed wire entanglements were all built and that there was no digging to be done, so most of them felt they could seek the dugouts and there warm themselves beside the glowing charcoal stoves which the Tommies had left burning and well supplied for their benefit. Then one by one the fellows rolled up in the blankets, and wet though they were, they slept the sleep of the just nor did they awaken again, in spite of rumbling guns and an occasional shell, until signs of daylight appeared.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUT WITH THE BOMBING SQUAD.

The trenches in which Danny and the rest found themselves almost joined those of the British on the left and formed an extension of the American sector on the right. As far as he could guess they were about five or six miles northwest of the point where they had first entered the trenches.

But the world that he gazed out on when he climbed to the firing step and looked through a periscope was far from an inviting looking place. All about was just one vast sea of mud. "No Man's Land" was a strange looking stretch filled with brown mud, old shoes, tin cans, rubbish of all kinds, pieces of barbed wire, stakes and shell holes, yawning deep and wide, and partly filled with water. But this queer looking camera-like box that he looked through could not let him see enough of what lay before him, so he and Mickey after some searching, found the salient of the trench in which an observation post was located and made their way out to it. This post was reached by a narrow, shallow trench through

which the boys had to crawl on their hands and knees. Just above them was the maze of tangled wire that formed the barricade before the trench. The winding ditch, scarcely deep enough to protect them from the watchful eyes of the Boches now at hand, ended in a pit about ten feet across, and about the depth of a tall man.

Here crouched behind a barricade of brown earth and sand bags were three figures, in slickers and helmets and hip boots, their eyes glued to round holes that had been worked through the earth and that looked out toward the German trenches, hardly a hundred yards distant. They stood there motionless but alert, never taking their eyes from the enemy for longer than a few moments at a time. The man in the middle of the line of three, had his shoulder pressed against the stock of an automatic rifle on a tripod and his finger always on the trigger, while his two companions had their ever-ready rifles at their shoulders and a bag of hand grenades slung over their shoulders.

Their job was to watch for the slightest suspicious signs of activities in the Boches' trenches, and day and night this observation post and scores of others just like it, hidden away in the earth, were manned with always watching Yankees.

Danny and Mickey got a brief chance to look

through the loop holes, and they gained a fine idea of what lay before them. Across that sea of mud between the trenches they saw the masses of barbed wire twined and intertwined and they knew that behind those strands were the pits and caves of the Germans.

Here and there they observed little mounds of earth, and in one place a series of three shell holes, apparently filled to the brim with water. But there was something strangely artificial about that water and Danny spoke to one of the observers about it.

"Good for you. You've got an eye, too, eh?" he exclaimed. "Say, that ain't water in them holes at all, that's camouflage water. I spotted it first thing this morning. And I watched and watched and watched and first thing I knew I saw some of that water rise up just a little and I saw a Boche looking out from under it. Then I reported that the Germans had machine guns hidden in the shell holes and covered over with canvas painted like water. I shouldn't wonder if the artillery got busy on 'em most any time now, or perhaps our machine guns will turn loose at 'em. But what we should do is to drop a few hand grenades on top of 'em or bomb 'em, that would fix the rotten Huns."

The big infantryman had hardly said the word, before Danny heard high above his head the loud

whirr of a motor, and looking aloft through the net work of wire entanglements he beheld an aeroplane circling slowly round and round."

"Ah, I'll bet he's lookin' for them," said the observer.

And he was right in his surmise. The aeroplane circled lower and lower in spite of the white smoke puffs that broke all about it as German shells screamed aloft to reach it.

Then a moment later Danny saw a black object fall from the aeroplane, and then another and another and another. And the next instant four great explosions sounded, and the earth out there where the machine guns were hidden opened up into huge craters, and as mud and stones, and black smoke shot skyward, Danny knew that the camouflaged dugouts with their hapless tenants were wiped out entirely.

"Wow, that's t' way to fix 'em!" said the observer joyfully, as the aeroplane dropped a final bomb for good measure and then raced for the American lines again.

The rain had ceased, when Danny and Mickey crawled back from the observation post, and almost all signs of the snow had been washed away or was confused with the dark brown mud that pulled and sucked at one's boots everywhere. But they could discard their slickers which was a comfort, and in the dugouts beside the charcoal

braziers they could dry their overcoats and other clothing, and feel that they would stay dry for a reasonably long period.

Soon after mid-day mess which was brought to them cold, but which the fellows heated in their mess tins over the charcoal stoves, word was sent up and down the trench that volunteers were needed for a raid on German trenches during the night, in which a big bombing party was to go out and clean up some of the trenches in front of the Americans' position.

Immediately the Wurra-wurra Squad volunteered in a body, and were accepted, for on previous occasions Danny and the rest had demonstrated their abilities as bomb-throwers, and Lieutenant McCabe, who was to have charge of the expedition, was glad to have them with him.

"Looks to me," said Dawson, while the fellows were preparing the preliminary details for their raid, "as if we are due to have an interesting time to-night out there in the swamps, eh, Danny?"

"Right-o," said Danny, from the depths of an undershirt, which he was just pulling over his head. He, like the rest, was changing to his oldest and dirtiest clothes, for he knew that crawling on his stomach through the muck and mud of "No Man's Land" for the greater part of the night, was going to make a spectacle of him, not

to mention the fact that he would doubtless be soaked to the skin. But since he had been able to smuggle an extra suit of winter underwear into the trenches, rolled in with his blankets, he laid the best suit aside so that he would have something dry to crawl into when he came back —if he did.

Darkness seemed slow in coming that evening to Danny and the rest who waited eagerly, with their allotment of bombs tucked away in their tunics, their ugly looking trench knuckle knives ready and their wire cutters handy, waiting for the time to go over the top.

And as they waited they looked for all the world like a crew of blood-thirsty savages for every man's face had been blacked with burnt cork. This had been done so that the men would know each other when they got into the German trenches and attack men with white faces only, also it was done to prevent the German sentries from seeing them when they got up close to the trenches.

Soon the half-light of evening came on and then very slowly the blackness of night overspread the sky, and rockets began to flare from both German and Yankee trenches. Then one by one the listening patrols went out, to lie all night in the muck and mud beyond the American trenches with their ears to the ground listening for Ger-

man tunneling expeditions, and a little later the raiders were gathered at a particular point in the trenches, and with a few final words of direction, one by one they started up the short ladder and over the top for their night's adventure.

Lieutenant McCabe led the way through a lane in the barbed wire entanglements and close behind him was Dawson with Bailey following on his heels. Danny was next in line and Mickey trailing him, while strung out behind were twelve more men, to complete the party, including Brick Logan, Tommy Ryan, Ned O'Toole and Freddy Daily, all of the Wurra-wurra Squad.

Once beyond the barbed wire entanglements, the men spread out from right to left with the Lieutenant at the right of the line and Corporal Dawson at the extreme left. In raiding of this kind it is most essential that the men stay very close together, within touching distance of each other. By a series of taps, orders are conveyed from one man to the other for not a word is spoken or even whispered in these night expeditions.

When all were in line, and on hands and knees, Lieutenant McCabe tapped once on the shoulder of the man next to him which meant that they would move on. The tap went down the line until it reached Dawson, who tapped in acknowledgment, and when the answer reached back to the

Lieutenant again, the line began to crawl slowly forward, like a lot of stealthy Indians.

But crawling out there in that sea of mud was far from pleasant or easy. The men's hands sank down into the cold, wet muck halfway to their elbows, filling their cuffs with the disagreeable stuff. Their knees, too, went deep and it was with great difficulty that they drew them out without producing a loud sucking sound. Progress was slow, indeed. And then to make matters worse, intermittently the Germans sent up star shells which cast a weird light over everything as they fell in "No Man's Land" and each time one of these appeared the men had to throw themselves flat on their stomachs in the mud and lie breathless until the light burned out.

Fortunately the shells always went up and fell between the raiders and the Germans, and the watching Boches, blinded by the glare, could discern only objects between the light and their own trenches, so as long as the Americans remained in a position where the lights were in front of them instead of behind them they were comparatively safe.

Forward they crawled, occasionally tapping for a rest, then tapping again to go on. And in spite of its disagreeable feature this night raiding was fun for Danny, and for most of the other men, for with it came that peculiar exhilaration

that goes with all scouting work; that sense of insecurity and adventure, where the slightest slip or oversight might bring disaster upon them all.

How long they had been wriggling forward on hands and knees flat upon their stomachs Danny could not guess. It was plenty long enough, however, to have chilled him to the bone, and it was only with great self-control that he was able to keep his teeth from rattling together whenever he shivered. On they pushed, for hours it seemed to Danny, out beyond their own listening posts, out through the muck and slime and tin-can littered stretch between the trenches.

Now and then the line was broken when a man floundered into a shell hole, but always the party waited until he had extricated himself as noiselessly as possible, and was again in touch with the rest of the men. Then they pushed forward once more.

Soon came a touch signal to be cautious, from the lieutenant at the right of the line. Every one froze to the spot and listened. And between the pulsating boom of the field batteries behind the American and German lines, the raiders could hear voices in conversation, coming from a point not far ahead of them.

For a long, long time they lay quite still in the cold wet mud, hardly daring to move Then, when the voices finally ceased, the touch signal

came to move forward again, and with it another signal to feel for barbed wire.

Again they moved softly forward and then felt out ahead of them for the strands of wire. Presently Danny's hands closed about a strand strung very close to the ground. Along this he reached until he found where it was fastened to a post and at this point he softly snipped it with his wire cutters and laid the strand on the ground. Others were clipping wire, too, and presently they all moved forward to the next strands that barred their way. They had to work with extreme care now for not thirty feet away from them stood German sentries with their heads above the parapet gazing out into "No Man's Land," and the slightest suspicious sound would bring a bullet in their direction, or would cause a star shell to go up that would expose them to the sharpshooters in the German trenches. It was delicate work, indeed.

But still they persisted, and strand after strand was cut and laid softly down, until soon the entire line had moved through the entanglement and lay closely snuggled under the shadow of the very parapet of the German trenches. To Danny this was a wonderful adventure. As he lay there he took a distinct pleasure in telling himself how near he was to sudden death. But for some reason that meant nothing to him.

What interested him most was the surprise that the Boches were about to receive.

A pause of a moment or two was allowed for every one to get ready and as the black-faced band crouched in the shadows they were so well hidden that one could not distinguish the man next to him.

Suddenly a touch signal went up and down the line, and with a wild yell, the ghostly black forms rose right up in front of the German sentries, and plunged over the parapet dropping down upon the sleeping figures huddled on the firing step below.

And the cries of fear and astonishment sent up by the surprised and frightened Boches were even more blood-curling than the war cries of the dusky raiders.

The black-faced Yankees worked with dispatch and energy. Everywhere a white-faced man appeared one of the raiders closed in on him. And if the Boche did not throw down his rifle and run madly away shrieking with fear, he found himself in the clutches of a veritable human tiger with a black face who wielded a double-edged and double-pointed trench knife with terrifying energy.

The Germans went down or scattered like a flock of sparrows, and in a few moments the black-faced Yankees found themselves in an al-

most deserted section of the trench, with a few pathetically limp forms lying upon the firing steps.

But the raiders realized that their stay in the trench would be short lived and that they must do as much damage as they could in the briefest possible time. Quickly the party divided into two sections, one moving up the trench and one down. The doorways of several dugouts, or underground chambers, showed in the immediate vicinity and to these the men hastened. Danny and Dawson were the first to reach the nearest one, and both men produced bombs, drew out the safety pins, and then, without any preliminary warning, tossed the grenades through the passageway into the chamber.

Two rumbling explosions occurred a few seconds later and the men moved on quite satisfied that the Boches who had dodged down there for protection would never come back to menace them from behind. On they moved, one party up the trench and the other down, and each time they came to a dugout they treated it as the first had been treated.

Presently they came to a salient in the trench around which they could not see. That there were Germans beyond to menace them they felt certain, so instead of going boldly around the corner, they stood in the trench and carefully

tossed grenades over the salient into the next section.

Several bombs exploding in the trench beyond the salient proved enough to clear the section, then bravely the black-faced crew started around the corner, and trampling over the prostrated Huns who had been done for by the bombs, they rushed to the nearest dugout and tossed some of the deadly pills down its throat, feeling quite certain that the explosions within would account for all the occupants.

And thus they worked with dispatch and system, and before long they had cleared almost a hundred yards of trenches, when suddenly through the air came the scream of a shell and a thunderous explosion. Word had been telephoned back to the nearest German battery and guns were shelling that particular portion of their own trenches.

At this Lieutenant McCabe thought it was high time they started back for their own lines, so he sounded his shrill whistle, and his black-faced clan quickly gathered, and clambered over the top of the German trenches to rush back to their own lines.

But right here the Germans showed that they had a card up their sleeve, too, for from some hidden point a searchlight flashed on and the long fingerlike ray, played up and down the trenches

until it located the raiders, crawling like rabbits through the lanes they had cut in the barbed wire. And then with a ripping roar, several machine guns began to spatter steel-jacketed bullets in the vicinity of the raiders, and before they knew it the Yankees were in a mighty difficult position, with a good chance of being wiped out entirely before they got free of the barbed wire and scattered.

Frantically the black-faced, mud-besmeared crew crawled and scuttled between the wires, dodging under uncut strands here, snipping some that barred their way, and trying with every energy to get free of the barrier through which they had so stealthily crawled. And all the time the searchlights played upon them and the machine guns ripped and tore and rifles hammered away unceasingly. Danny saw first one man and then another go down while crawling through the narrow lanes they had cut, and a deadly spray of bullets spattered about him, too. Several bounced off his helmet with a loud ping, and one or two sent up sparks from the barbed wires that surrounded him, while one creased his leg with exactly the same sensation as a hot poker would produce had it been drawn quickly across his flesh.

They were on their own now, and as quickly as each of the black-faced band got free of the

wires he ran madly out of the white rays of the searchlight, while the operator, wherever he was hidden, tried frantically to cover them with the blinding flash.

Fortunately the American artillery came to their rescue about that time, for a shower of shells was sent in the direction from which the searchlight played, and whether it was quickly shattered or whether the operator shut it off in fear that it would be hit, Danny could not tell, but the white light flashed out as quickly as it had appeared and left the world blindingly dark. But the machine guns and rifles did not cease firing by any means and "No Man's Land" was swept with a constant rain of bullets.

Danny freed himself from the barbed wire almost the moment the searchlight went out, and with a wild plunge rushed toward the American trenches, only to stumble, slip and fall a moment later into a water-filled shell hole.

Hastily he dragged himself out, but realized after that that he would have to make his way slowly, or he stood a good chance of breaking his neck or having a leg bumped off by a stray machine gun bullet.

So, crawling as before, only this time quite alone, he started back toward his own trenches, once more pulling himself through the mud and muck with great effort, for he was very tired.

On he pressed, making as little noise as possible so that he would not expose himself to the very busy German snipers.

On and on he wriggled and crawled, staring hopefully ahead for the first signs of the American trenches. And after a seemingly interminable space of time in which he floundered around out there in that hopeless waste, almost on the point of exhaustion, he stumbled against more barbed wire.

"Who goes there?" came the crisp challenge in English, and never in his life had Danny heard words that sounded so pleasant.

Danny answered the challenge and identified himself, and was directed to the nearest lane through the barbed wire, and presently he tumbled over the parapet of his own trench, feeling more dead than alive.

"It's Kelly," he heard Sergeant Hughes say, as some one picked him up and stood him on his feet.

Then Danny found his tongue.

"Did—did—are the rest of them back?"

"I should say not," said Sergeant Hughes, now acting Second Lieutenant. "Dawson got back and so did Bailey and one other man." We wonder that any of you got in. They sure gave you one hot time. Lieutenant McCabe is missing yet. But come on, now, get into a dugout and warm

up a bit, there's some hot coffee waiting for you in our shack."

And Sergeant Hughes, with the help of another man, half carried and half dragged Danny into a dugout where they stripped him and wrapped him in dry blankets, and gave him some piping hot coffee, and before long Danny, feeling very much relieved, dozed off.

CHAPTER XVII.

BRAVING THE PERILS OF "NO MAN'S LAND."

The raid had proved disastrous to the Boches and the Americans alike. During the early hours of the morning, two other members of the party staggered in more dead than alive, and both so seriously wounded that they had to be rushed to the hospital immediately. They, with Danny, Dawson and Bailey, were the only survivors, as far as could be learned.

Cheerful little Mickey, with his always ready wit, was gone, which almost broke Danny's heart. How or when the sturdy little Irishman had met his fate, Danny did not know. He had seen him fighting madly in the German trenches and he had seen him later, tossing bombs down a dug-out, but that was the last he remembered. Danny had to swallow hard to hide the feeling of unhappiness that welled up in him when he realized that he would never again hear the voice of the always happy little fellow.

But of more importance to every one save Danny was the fact that Lieutenant McCabe had not returned. The Lieutenant by some strange

chance had gone out on the raiding expedition carrying very important papers, which outlined a concerted attack about to be started by the combined English and American forces. It was highly necessary that these papers should not fall into the Germans' hands, and all night long Captain Ragan and other officers kept a careful watchout for the Lieutenant, and every man who came back to the trenches, either from the raid or from patrol duty in "No Man's Land," was closely questioned as to whether they had seen any signs of the lost officer.

But no one had and when daylight came word was sent to every outpost to search "No Man's Land" with field glasses to see if they could locate the body of the officer.

And about the middle of the morning, while Danny, Dawson and Bailey, all refreshed with their sleep and rest, were in Captain Ragan's dugout, telling him of the details of the raid, word came from a nearby lookout post that the body of the Lieutenant had been located out in the space between the trenches, not more than twenty yards from the German wire entanglements.

Eagerly, Captain Ragan hurried out to the nearest periscope and the three boys followed him, for they were as much concerned about the loss of the Lieutenant as any one else.

But the periscope did not reveal the section of "No Man's Land" in which the officer lay, so the Captain, Danny, and Dawson and Bailey, at his invitation, made for the nearest observation post, which proved to be the one from which Danny, with the departed Mickey, had watched the destruction of the machine gun pits the day before. A big lump rose in Danny's throat when he thought of the cheerful little Irishman, and he could not help the suggestion of moisture that gathered in his eyes. It was hard to lose Mickey. With the sturdy chap gone, he and Dawson and Bailey were the only ones left of the Wurrawurra Squad, for not one of the four rear rank men who had gone out last night had come back. Brick Logan, Ryan, O'Toole and Freddy Daily were all stark and still out there in "No Man's Land."

At the advanced post, with the aid of field glasses and instructions from the keen-eyed observer, Captain Ragan located the body of Lieutenant McCabe, and when he put down the glasses, there was a grim look on his usually kind face.

"McCabe is done for, that's certain, but we must have the papers he carried, and we must have them immediately. Why in thunder did he take them along?" he said.

Dawson looked through the field glasses, then,

making way for Danny, he stepped back to consider the situation. Very seriously he turned and spoke with the officer.

"Captain," he said, "I think I can get Lieutenant McCabe's body back to the trenches if I can have some help."

"Man, you can have all the help necessary," assured the Captain. Then he added eagerly, "What are your plans?"

"Very simple, sir. If the artillery will start pounding the German trenches so that the Boches will keep their heads down, and if our machine-gun men and a lot of rifles will cover me and pick off any German snipers, I'll go over the top and across "No Man's Land," and if I don't bring Lieutenant McCabe's body back, it will be because I can't come back myself."

Captain Ragan looked at him thoughtfully for a moment. Then a smile overspread his face, and he held out his hand.

"By George, that's Yankee pluck, for you. Dawson, you have my permission."

"Say," interrupted Bailey, "you don't want to take all the glory yourself, do you, Bunkie? And anyhow, one man going out there alone might fail. You should have two men go over the top, and I'm the other one."

"No, there should be three," said Danny, with a determined air, "and I'm the third. We're all

that's left of the squad and we'll stick together."

"Well, I think, so far as assistance is concerned, Dawson should have a companion, or perhaps two, but no more. Very good, men, I'll start the preparations immediately."

Back to the dugout they hurried, and the Captain got the artillery officer on the telephone and told him of the plan. The artillery commander, all enthusiasm, called the various artillery observation posts for the range of the German trenches at the point where Lieutenant McCabe lay. Then suddenly inspired, he phoned back to Captain Ragan.

"Captain," he said, "let the men start in just fifteen minutes—seven thirty-five, to be exact, and I'll throw a barrage fire in front of them all the way out to the trench and back. That will cover them against a sudden dash of the Germans if our trench fire doesn't keep all the Huns underground."

"Very good, Captain," returned the infantry commander, and then, turning to the three boys, he told them of the plans.

In less than a minute the first shell of the bombardment went screaming over the dugout to explode in the German trenches. Then gun after gun let loose as the signal came back that the range was right, and before long, thirty guns were pouring a rain of shells over into the Teu-

ton's first line trenches. The bombardment was thunderous in its volume and the gunners back there in the screened and hidden emplacements worked like fiends serving the ever-hungry cannon.

Meanwhile word had been passed along the trench for the expert riflemen and sharpshooters to stand to and account for every helmet that appeared, and in the various dugouts the ripping and tearing of the machine-guns started simultaneously.

And the Germans, not knowing exactly what was about to happen, took to cover with a vague feeling that an attack was imminent.

Fifteen minutes crawled slowly by, and meanwhile the three would-be rescuers stood on the firing step, patiently waiting. Seven thirty-five came and the bombardment seemed to increase in fury and presently a barrage of shells began dropping not twenty feet beyond the American entanglement. This began to move slowly across "No Man's Land," toward the German trenches.

"Ready boys, and God bless you," said Captain Ragan, as he shook hands with the three of them.

Dawson was on the bottom-most rung of the scaling ladder. Up he went with a smile on his face and in a moment he was on the parapet. An instant he stood there erect. Then with a cry that trailed off into a groan he staggered, threw

up his arms and pitched backwards, falling into Danny's arms. A ragged hole was torn in the breast of his tunic where the German sniper's bullet had struck him, and blood flowed from it freely. Danny, white and speechless, laid the prostrate man on the firing steps, and Dawson, opening his eyes, said softly,

"Go, Danny, go and God bless you. I was almost sure I'd never make it. Good-bye," and he squeezed Danny's hand weakly.

Danny, pale but determined, gave Dawson's hand a parting clasp, and, like a flash, was up the scaling ladder, flinging himself over the parapet and flat upon the ground. Then in haste, he crawled forward through the lane between the barbed wire until he was clear of the entanglement, then pausing a moment, and lying flat on his stomach, looked around for Bailey.

Presently over the top came the big fighter, and he, too, profiting by Dawson's experience, flung himself onto the ground immediately, and began to crawl up toward Danny.

The barrage fire ahead was moving fast and Danny felt that he should keep as close up under the line of bursting shells as he dared and not risk being killed by flying splinters. So on he crawled, through the cold, wet mud over which he had wandered the night before. On he pushed, and as he moved forward he heard the

whine of bullets overhead, their message telling him that death lurked by a foot or two above him. But whether they were bullets from his own trenches or from the German line, he could not tell. All he knew was that if one of them found him, the rescue of Lieutenant McCabe would depend solely upon the efforts of Big Bill, who was but ten feet behind him, crawling through the cold, wet, sticky mud with as much of an effort as he was making.

This mode of travel was not conducive to speed, but it was safer, Danny told himself. It was hard to drag himself forward through the yielding wet earth. Ice particles and stones cut and bruised his hands and knees, and sometimes he became so deeply mired that he was forced to pause and wrench himself free. He was tired and weak and weary, but still he must go on.

He floundered forward. Once he rolled down into a shell hole half filled with water, but pulled himself out again dripping wet and very uncomfortable. On he pushed. He was nearing the point of utter exhaustion now. If he could only stand up and walk or run, he would feel better, but he dared not take any extra chances; at least not then. Perhaps coming back, he could run, for he saw no way of carrying the lifeless Lieutenant unless he stood erect.

Twice he glanced back for Bailey, and the big

infantryman was following him doggedly, grunting and grumbling, over the mud that seemed to want to clutch his hands and limbs and retard his progress.

"Only a little way further," called back Danny encouragingly, then turning he pushed on. Still the bullets sang their deadly message, and some of them, falling close to Danny, thumped the mud with a disagreeable sound as if they were ploughing their way through a human body. Danny shuddered, but still he crawled on.

The barrage had passed over the spot where the Lieutenant lay, thirty yards ahead, and was now riddling the barbed wire entanglements. Danny kept his eyes on the grim, motionless figure in khaki, lying stark and still there in the mud ahead of him, and as he realized that their goal was very close now, he redoubled his efforts and, in spite of almost utter exhaustion, he crawled faster and faster. He was thirty yards away. German bullets were thumping about him and American bullets were singing over his head. He struggled forward—twenty-five yards to go. He was weak and tired, and he wished, oh, so much, to stand up and stretch his arms and legs. They were cold and cramped and sometimes almost refused to move. But on he crawled, twenty-five yards, fifteen yards, he could see the ghastly mud-smeared countenance of the dead

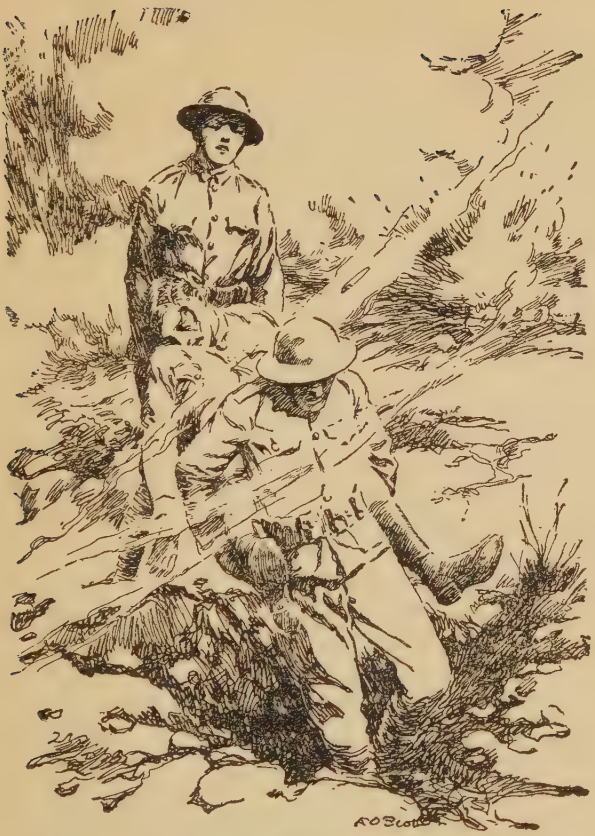
Lieutenant quite distinctly now. He shuddered when he thought of the officer's fate. But still he crawled forward.

Ten yards away—and Bailey was right behind him. Eight yards now, five, four, three, he was beside the dead Lieutenant, but he was so exhausted that he could not restrain an impulse to fling himself down beside the dead man and rest until Bailey came up, in spite of the rain of bullets and shells.

Bailey, panting and weak, but determined looking, and with a blood-soaked coat sleeve where a bullet had creased him, came up beside him.

"Come, Danny, we've t'worst before us," he said huskily, as he arose to a crouching position, and without any ado, gathered the Lieutenant's legs in his arms. And Danny, spurred on by the doggedness of his partner, got up, too, and, slipping his arms under the Lieutenant's shoulders, lifted the stiff, heavy form from its muddy bed, and started on their long, perilous journey back.

Then the cannonading that was let loose by the Yankee artillerymen was deafening. Every gun within miles of the section, British and American alike, joined the deadly chorus, and the German trenches were beaten into a veritable pulp, in a mad effort to keep the Boches underground.



CHAP. XVII—Back Staggered Danny and Bailey, slipping and sliding in a sea of mud

Back staggered Danny and Bailey, slipping and sliding, in the sea of mud they had crawled through. Walking and struggling to carry their cumbersome burden was not any easier than crawling had been. They were tired and weak, but still they stuck to their task. Once Bailey went down, slipping into a shell hole, and the full weight of the Lieutenant's body dragged Danny down, too. There they floundered around and slipped and slid in the muck, trying hard to regain their feet, and all the time losing precious minutes.

But soon they were up again and staggering onward. Forward they pressed, struggling over uncertain footing that threatened to throw them again and again. Their progress back, however, was swifter than their journey out had been. Before long they could see their eager comrades watching them over the parapets of their trenches. Some were cheering and some were calling words of encouragement, and all these inspired the two rescuers to greater effort. On they staggered. Soon they reached their own barbed wire entanglements. They were in the lane between, threading their perilous way toward the trenches and not yet out of danger of some of the hidden German snipers. The sharp barbs of their own wires clutched at their clothing as they passed through tearing big rents and

retarding their progress. But with their goal so near, nothing could stop them now. They stumbled and staggered forward with grim determination, and suddenly, with a final plunge, they reached the sand bagged parapet, and, exhausted but successful, they tumbled over the top and into their own trenches, amid a thunderous cheer that went up on all sides. Thousands of eyes had been watching them, American, English and German, and there was not a man, among friends and enemies alike, who did not appreciate the bravery of the last two men of the Wurra-wurra Squad.

Stretcher bearers, waiting and ready, took charge of the dead Lieutenant and carried him into the Captain's dugout, and a physician applied a hasty dressing to Bailey's arm, while scores crowded about the two heroes and sought to take their hands.

Then through the press of men Captain Ragan made his way, and with a happy smile on his face, he wrung their hands and exclaimed:

"I am relieved to know you both got back safely. It was wonderful; perfectly wonderful, and with Yankee grit like that in our ranks I can't see where the Germans stand the slightest chance of winning out in this war."

"But Dawson, Captain, how is the Corporal?" asked Danny eagerly.

The Captain's face changed. He looked sad and unhappy.

"He's dead," he said simply, "died on the way to the dressing station, and we lose a mighty brave man in his passing."

And at the news Danny and Bailey became very quiet. All the fun had gone out of the expedition for them and they would have sacrificed all the glory they had earned if they could have known that their old side partner was still alive.

"Danny," said Bailey, "me and Dawson had it out once and he licked the daylight out of me. But it was the best turn any man has ever done for me, and I can say I've lost the only real friend I ever had. Believe me—it—it—aw, I—can't say it," he mumbled, looking away, his chin puckering and tears glistening in his eyes. Then he turned back savagely.

"The Huns, the rotten butchers will pay for this. They took him away from me—but they'll pay. I'll get a dozen of 'em in return, an' you watch an' see if I don't," and he walked off grumbling towards the now very lonesome dugout where the Wurra-wurra boys had been wont to congregate.

As for Danny, he couldn't bear to go near the place from which so many of his friends had so recently passed, at least not just then, so he stumbled off up the trench and crawled back through

a narrow tunnel, letting himself into a dugout, over the door of which was a sign "Suicide Club."

Inside the machine gun emplacement he borrowed a blanket, and, curling up in a corner, lay down to rest, feeling thoroughly unhappy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NIGHT IN A SHELL CRATER.

Danny and Big Bill, always good friends since the broad-shouldered fighter was transferred to CC Company, became almost inseparable since the passing of Dawson and the almost complete annihilation of the Wurra-wurra Squad. Each found in the other a really worth-while friend, and Danny knew that Big Bill would do anything for him even to sacrificing his life. Then the fact that Big Bill was considered one of the best men in the Company, in spite of having begun his life with the outfit under a cloud and with a reputation as a trouble maker, proved to Danny conclusively that there was a lot more good in the big man than there was bad. Indeed, there did not appear to be anything bad about him now, save his temper, and fortunately this was all directed against the Huns.

Bailey took to sniping as a diversion during the next few days, just by way of wreaking vengeance on the Boches for the killing of Dawson, and every time he saw a German helmet disappear after he had pulled the trigger, he grinned

savagely and remarked that he wasn't through yet. He took some desperate chances as a sniper, too, and, being a good shot, there is no doubt but that he accounted for a good many of the enemy.

As for Danny, the next few days were taken up with a great mental struggle for he was trying to forget his double grief at the loss of Mickey and the subsequent death of the big Nebraskan. It hurt a lot not to be able to turn to the big corporal for advice or to hear Mickey's apt remark on every occasion.

And, meanwhile, Danny spent an inactive time in the trenches or crawled up beside the ever-watchful Bailey, who sought out odd places from which to do his sniping. Great things were happening behind the lines of which Danny knew very little and only occasionally heard vague rumors.

Thousands of troops, both British and American not to mention French, Canadian and Australian contingents, were being shifted about and concentrated for a huge attack. More artillery was being brought up, too, as the ever-increasing thunder of the ridge behind gave testimony. Indeed, before long the grumbling rumble developed the power of a real bombardment, and daily this grew in intensity until before long the cannonade was the most terrific the men had ever heard. Thousands of long-nosed and sleek-look-

ing flame-belching field pieces were concentrated in the rear, and day and night unceasingly they bellowed forth their deadly anthem and the blackness of night was pierced on every hand by their darting tongues of fire. It was plain, indeed, that a tremendous attack was imminent, but when it was to take place none but the officers really knew, and they were uncommunicative. The object of the attack was evidently to be the big town of B—— two miles behind the German lines and but dimly seen from the American trenches.

Freezing weather had come on, and the soft earth once more became of flinty hardness, and cold, blowy snowstorms that sent powdery flakes drifting everywhere, visited the region. But this intense cold was far more satisfactory than the weather of the previous few days, for the men could not endure the mud and murky dampness that chilled them to the bone in spite of their heaviest clothes, where they could drink in this fine crisp atmosphere and feel as healthy as young giants.

Charcoal braziers in the dugouts kept them warm between periods of guard duty, and their sweaters and knitted helmets, so thoughtfully provided by the thousands of loving women and girls back home who were knitting for the soldiers, kept out the stinging winds and made them as warm and comfortable as could be.

Day by day the cannonading grew more intense until the men became so hardened to the terrific din both in front and in the rear of their trenches and the screeching and hissing of shells overhead, that they paid but slight attention to the roar most of the time. There was little for them to do except stand their share of the guard duty, and between times stick close to their dugouts playing cards, or talking, or sleeping, but always holding themselves ready for action at a moment's notice.

To be sure, the Germans were not utterly inactive. Now and then shells reached the American first line trenches and burst with a roar, scattering deadly splinters in every direction. Then there was a particular salient of the German trenches that reached out quite close to the Americans, and from this, which was a little on the left of the front that CC Company held, trench mortars hurled ugly, sluggish shells which could be seen coming, but which fell into the trenches with deadly intent, though rarely accomplishing their purpose for the reason that the Americans were always watching for them and always took to cover when they began dropping.

But this salient was causing no end of disagreeable surprises every once in a while, and it was the general opinion that if that little cor-

ner of trench could be obliterated or captured before the big attack, the American line could be straightened out better, and the pesky Boches who inhabited it and made life uncomfortable ever so often during the day, could be sent further to the rear.

This was the general opinion among the men and it was talked of in the dugouts time and time again; indeed, it became the subject of so much talk that Captain Ragan took interest in it, and made a personal reconnoissance. And the result of it was that he decided that before the big attack should be started, it would be better to organize a big daylight trench raid between the men of CC Company and the American company on their left, which was also harassed by the salient, and take over that corner of the trenches.

Plans were laid accordingly, and about noon of the fourth day of the big bombardment, Sergeant Hughes, who that very morning had been made Second Lieutenant in place of Lieutenant McCabe, was placed in command of the party that was to charge from the CC Company trench, while an officer of the same rank was given the honor of leading the party from the adjoining American trench.

Then the officers went about organizing their party. About fifty men were to attack from each trench, one coming up on the left of the Ger-

man salient and the other on the right, and meanwhile machine guns were to rake the trenches from directly in front, until the Americans closed in and cleaned out the Boches.

Lieutenant Hughes went down the trench, picking out his candidates for the raid. The best bayonet fighters of the Company were chosen and sent forward to the point where the men were to go over the top, but when he came to Danny and Bailey, he hesitated a moment and then passed on.

Bailey looked surprised.

"What's t' matter, sir, don't you like our looks?" he asked almost impudently, and the officer smiled.

"You fellows have been through enough recently, I'm going to give some one else a chance," he said, "besides I think you both could stand a thorough rest."

"Oh, if that's all that's bothering you, we're with you; come on, Danny," and grabbing up his rifle preliminary to fixing his bayonet in place, Big Bill grinned broadly at the Lieutenant.

"Well, if you feel you must go, all right. Glad to have both of you," said the officer. Then he added, "Go up the trench with the rest. We'll go over the top in just one-half hour from now, after the salient is softened up a bit."

Danny and Big Bill hurried to the end of the

trench where the rest of the men were congregating. Just beyond was an earth and sand partition which cut their trench off from the portion of the first line held by the next company, and Danny knew that on the other side of the wall a similar group of infantrymen was gathering.

Crouching there under the protection of the parapet of the trench, muffled in sweaters and helmets and gripping their cold rifles with numbed fingers, they waited. And while they waited, there seemed suddenly to be a break in the cadence of the artillery's thundering chorus. But presently the death song was taken up again, only this time many of the explosions of falling shells seemed a lot nearer to the American trenches.

"They've cut loose on the salient, I guess," said Bailey, and his guess was correct, for a big group of the guns had shifted their range and were now dropping shells in the V-shaped trench that reached in close toward the American lines. These shells were directed so that the whole point was cut off from the main trench by a wall of exploding projectiles so deadly that the Germans could neither move out of the trench into their other first line fortifications, nor could they move men forward into the salient by ordinary methods. They were hemmed in by a deadly curtain of shells.

Lieutenant Hughes came up and inspected his men. Then he looked at his wrist watch.

"Ten minutes of this and we'll start," he snapped, as he drew out his automatic pistol and, after examining its magazine, held it conveniently in his right hand while he moved toward the four-runged ladder which was to carry the men over the top.

Every heart beat fast with expectation, in spite of the fact that all of the raiders were seasoned men at trench fighting. Each one was eager to be up and at the Boches, and each awaited impatiently, huddled in a group and blowing their steaming breath on the tips of their numbed fingers, so that they could grasp their rifles more firmly.

Again the Lieutenant looked at his watch.

"Two minutes more," he said crisply, as he put one foot on the ladder and gripped his pistol firmly. "Then——"

"Ready, men! Come on! And yell! Yell like fiends as you charge!"

Up went the Lieutenant over the top, and up scrambled man after man. They poured over the sandbag parapets like a pack of wolves, and as each man came to the surface, he began yelling at the top of his voice, and high above it all was raised, the roaring voice of Bailey with his wurra-wurra cry. Other men were coming over

the top, too, from the adjoining trenches, their bayonets flashing and their battle yells ringing out. Danny could see them across the stretch of the V-shaped angle of trenches and he could not help but thrill when he beheld the roaring young giants who were to fight with them. Through the lanes between the barbed wire they plunged and soon were treading the deadly acres of "No Man's Land," while from their right and left and in the center ripped and tore the high-pitched voices of the machine guns.

Lieutenant Hughes, brandishing his pistol and yelling, led the charge and the men followed in scattered formation, running swiftly and yelling, too. Danny and Bailey were close together. To Danny this charge seemed like a dream. He hardly realized he was running. Indeed, he hardly realized he was doing anything at all, but just yelling. He seemed intoxicated with the excitement. He ran, yelled and looked for the Boches.

And startlingly soon he beheld them. So did every one else. And every man realized that instead of springing a surprise on the Huns, the Huns had sprung a surprise on them.

When the charge was started, all that could be seen of the salient was the gray, ragged outline of the top of the trench, behind smashed wire entanglements, with shells bursting to the rear

and on either side of them. But before they had gone fifty feet, behold the trench line began to bristle with flashing bayonets, and then, like demons out of a pit, up popped the Germans, and instead of a meager hundred, as there were of the Americans, there were over three hundred of them; a whole company. The Yankees did not know it at the time, but the salient had been reinforced through an underground tunnel the moment the American bombardment of the point of trenches began. They knew that a raid was coming, and in order to save their trench they had massed three times the normal quantity of men in the salient, determined to hold that advantageous point under any circumstances. And in their eagerness to give battle to the Yankees they actually showed themselves above the trenches, bayonets fixed and ready, at the same time pouring a withering fire into the ranks of the raiders.

The wave of charging Americans faltered a moment, but it was sure death to turn and flee, so outnumbered as they were, they plunged forward again, yelling and firing as they came. And meanwhile the American artillery shifted its range and dropped shell upon shell into the crowded German trenches.

On dashed the Americans, regardless of their thinning ranks. Lieutenant Hughes, trampling

over the wire defenses uprooted by the American shells, began firing point blank with his revolver at the hundreds of heads of the Huns raised above the defenses. And his men were right behind him. On they dashed! And with a clash of steel and blood-curdling cries they closed in.

The mass of men met on the very parapet of the trench, the Germans climbing up to meet their enemies, and there on the brink of that precious ditch they battled, swaying back and forth, yelling, stabbing, shooting and struggling for mastery.

Danny and Bailey, caution thrown to the winds, plunged in with the rest. Three towering Germans attacked them—there was a clash of bayonets as they came together, then the flash of fire and two of the Boches fell backward into the trenches, while the other, impailed on Bailey's bayonet, sank to the ground with a groan. Danny leapt forward to the very brink of the trenches. Below him more men and still more men in gray were climbing up to meet him.

He began firing into the mass. Then suddenly it seemed to him as if his own rifle had exploded in his hands, for there was a deafening roar and a blinding flash. A shell had burst very close to him. He felt himself thrown violently backwards. Dazed, but half conscious, he knew that he was being hurled through the air. Then he

landed, rolled over and over again, and dropped down, down, down into a black and bottomless pit. He fell, feet first, into soft earth, staggered, toppled backward, and then something hit him a stunning blow on the head and the world went black.

. . . . . .

When next he became conscious, darkness still surrounded him. His first thoughts were that he had gone blind. He passed his hands over his eyes hurriedly, and a great fear clutched at his heart. Then he looked up again and a glad sigh escaped him, for aloft he could see distinctly the twinkle of stars in the heavens. It was night.

Where was he and how had he gotten there? he asked himself. Then slowly he began to collect his befuddled senses. He recalled the charge, the surprise, the clash, the encounter with the Boches, his leap to the brink of the trench, the mass of gray men, the blinding and terrible roar as the shell burst, and then the vague and shifting aftermath when he was sent reeling and struggling backward. That was all he could recall. Where he was he had not the slightest idea, save that he was in a deep pit and lying on his back and that his head hurt.

Cautiously he felt of his head to find it resting on a splintered and twisted piece of a shell.

Blood had matted and clotted in his hair, and he could feel an ugly wound in his head that had long since stopped bleeding. He guessed from this that he had been lying unconscious for hours. Indeed, it must have been for a long time, for the attack was started early in the day, and here it was some time in the night. He looked at his wrist watch and saw that it was past two o'clock in the morning.

He wondered if he was wounded. He moved first one arm and then the other. Then he drew up his legs. He felt no pain. He sat up, turned and twisted about and was surprised to find himself entirely whole and in apparently good working order, save that his head swam and he was very dizzy.

The next question to be settled was his whereabouts, and while he was mentally debating this he realized, too, that he was very, very cold. He was in a shell crater, of that he felt certain; and a big one, too, and he was somewhere between the American and German lines, he could tell that from the terrific bombardment that was being kept up from the American side and the screech and scream of shells that passed overhead. He wanted to stand up; indeed, he tried, but he was so dizzy that he fell back immediately. And as he lay there collecting his senses again he realized it was well he had not been able to stand

for in all the din he could hear the keen, sharp whistles of bullets passing just above the top of the shell crater. He was in the line of heavy rifle firing.

This gave him food for thought. He could not have been hurled far from the German salient, and since bullets were passing over his head, he must be between the two lines instead of being in the rear of the American trench works, where he would be if the Yankees had taken the salient. Quickly he deduced that the Americans had been beaten back in their efforts to capture the trench, and that the Boches still held that point of advantage from which they could harass the American line.

Danny's deductions were correct, but little did he know how seriously the Americans had been beaten back. Indeed, but a handful of men had returned whole from that encounter, his big friend Bailey being one of the fortunate few. To be sure, they had made the Huns pay for the charge in scores of dead and wounded, but the Germans had been far too strong for them, and after a half hour's battle, the Americans fell back, beaten in numbers but having outfought the Huns in spite of it.

The young American lay for a long time quite still, wondering what was best for him to do. And as he lay there he suddenly became aware

of a noise quite near him, distinctly different from the noises of the bombardment. It seemed first to be a series of groans, but as he listened longer he heard a man speaking in a mumbling guttural tongue, of which he could not understand a word. But it was not the speech of a man in conversation. It was the rambling of a delirious person, possibly wounded. And he was in the shell crater with Danny.

The young American lay quite still and listened. The mumbling grew louder and more distinct as if the man were fast coming out of a state of coma. He was a German, of that Danny was certain, for he heard some words that recalled to him his high school German lessons.

Then presently the man began stirring and moving about; crawling, perhaps, for he could hear him moving his body over the ground. And as he crawled his voice grew louder still, and suddenly it dawned upon Danny that he was listening to the ravings of a madman, for certainly no human being would talk so much to himself or with such vehemence, unless he were stark mad.

With this realization, Danny became really frightened. He felt about him for some means of defending himself. His empty bayonet scabbard and a few clips of rifle cartridges were all that he had.

Still the Boche in the shell crater dragged himself over the ground, and Danny realized after a few moments that the madman was slowly but surely coming his way.

But a moment later the crawling and scraping stopped and the next instant the Hun gave vent to a startling and most blood-curdling yell.

What had happened? Danny had a vague idea that the madman had discovered his presence in the shell crater. He was about to spring up when the night was illuminated with the glare of white light as overhead sailed a star shell, to hang for a second in the sky, throwing light over the landscape and filling the deep shell crater with a ghastly, weird glare.

And in those few seconds a sight was revealed to Danny that made him weak and faint for the moment, for across the shell crater he beheld, crouching like an ape over the corpse of an American soldier, the hideous, hairy, blood-smeared countenance of a giant German. And in his hand, held menacingly over the dead Yankee was a long, glittering trench knife.

An instant he paused thus. Then, as if to show his hate for Americans, even dead ones, he gave another piercing shriek, and in the ghastly white light Danny saw the man plunge the knife into the limp, Yankee form! Then the shell went out and a denser darkness than before shut in the mad-

man, the dead man and Danny there in the shell crater.

What ghastly, unearthly horrors surged through Danny's brain in the next half second! It was all plain to him now! The big Hun, wounded and driven mad by the terrific American bombardment, as many another man had been driven mad by shell fire, was in the crater! And in this madman surged an ungovernable hatred for the Americans. Danny, his high school German coming back to him, could translate that last frantic sentence, "dead, or not dead, I hate you," and to give vent to his wrath, he had stabbed the corpse of the Yankee. If he acted thus with a man whom he knew to be dead, what would he do when he discovered Danny!

And upon this came another fear. Had he discovered the presence of the live American in the shell hole during the brief interval of light! Danny wondered. He sat still and listened. The Hun was crawling away again and talking to himself, very loud now, in a highly pitched, enraged voice. It made Danny shudder. If only he had his rifle, or a bayonet, or a pistol, he would feel safer. But he was without anything, it was horrible.

In desperation he began to feel about on the ground, and presently his hand came in contact with the piece of shell upon which he had hit his

head. It had a long jagged splinter to it which made a capital handle, the heavy steel ring of the butt making of it a real hammer. Danny picked it up and clutched it firmly and never in his life was he so pleased to find anything as he was with that formidable war club.

Still the scraping and the crawling kept up, getting nearer and nearer Danny, and still the mad German raved in his ugly guttural language. Danny got up to a crouching position and waited, peering eagerly through the darkness for the madman. Oh, for a star shell now. If he only could glimpse his antagonist for a moment.

And, as if in answer to his appeal, a baleful light burst upon the scene, which grew brighter and brighter as the star shell raced heavenward. And in the weird glow Danny beheld, not ten feet from him, the crouching form of the maniac, his wicked face turned toward him, his ugly mouth opened, and his sinister eyes glaring at him, while aloft he held the ugly trench knife.

While the light yet remained Danny leapt forward, swinging the heavy, steel hammer, his only weapon. The German staggered to his feet, too. They met with a crash. Danny tried to strike him with the heavy piece of shell, but the German, seizing it, wrenched it from his grasp. In desperation Danny grappled and felt for the hand that held the trench knife. Their bodies

came together, they swayed, struggled for a moment and went down in a heap, and at the same instant the star shell's light vanished and blackness surrounded them.

It was a fight to the finish now, Danny knew, and a very uneven fight, for the German, bigger and stronger by far, and with the advantage of the trench knife, was an ugly opponent. But to Danny came the slight advantage in that he found himself on top of the huge Hun with his legs straddling his chest, and one hand clasping the German's wrist, while with the other he sought in the tangled beard for the madman's throat.

How the German struggled and writhed and hissed and cried aloud as he tried to fling Danny off of him. And how Danny struggled with the strength of a desperate man to keep the German down and hold onto the hand that held that deadly knife. They scuffled about and kicked and squirmed and the German bit and clawed and did everything he could to free himself and get at Danny, but slowly the young American's grip closed upon the Boche's throat.

Then suddenly, with a superhuman effort, the Hun freed his right arm, wrenching it from Danny's gripping fingers, and Danny, going cold with horror, realized that the next instant the wicked knife would be plunged into his side.

Danny did the one and only thing he could do. Like a flash his right hand drew back and shot forward again. And in that one blow he put every ounce of strength he possessed. Fist met jaw with the impact of a mule's kick. Danny felt something give way under his hard knuckles. The big form under him writhed and quivered all over, then, the muscles relaxing, it settled back, and the hand upraised for the deadly blow with the knife, fell limp. The Hun was knocked out.

Eagerly Danny felt of the Boche's heart. It was still beating. In a few seconds he would revive again. Danny quickly possessed himself of the trench knife, and, stripping off his webbed cartridge belt he bound the German's hands and with the Hun's own belt he bound his feet. Then half carrying, half dragging the heavy form, he drew him over to the higher side of the shell crater and laid him down.

Danny began to feel about in the darkness again. That stark form of the American somehow annoyed him with its presence. Soon he stumbled over it. Then, lifting it carefully, he raised it up to the edge of the shell crater and pushed it over into the darkness beyond. And then because he was weary and cold he huddled up beside the big prisoner and sat looking off

toward the American lines, and as he watched he could see that dawn was coming on and that another day was beginning, for in the East was the cold violet light that preceded sunrise. And what a day this was to be for Danny!

CHAPTER XIX.

HURLING BACK THE HUNS.

The light grew stronger swiftly, and presently the first yellow rays of the sun flooded the desolate war-ridden landscape. And as Danny gazed off toward the American trenches he was surprised to behold the golden light taken up and flashed back from thousands of steely points above the trenches. These points were the bayonets of the Americans.

Danny's heart stood still for the moment, then as a mad cry rolled forth across "No Man's Land," Danny's heart raced on again and his pulse quickened, for with that cry the Yankees began to make their appearance. Up they sprang, over the parapet, not one line of them but three; three lines of fighting Yankee grit with bayonets fixed and battle cries ringing from their lips. The big attack was on!

It was a magnificent spectacle and Danny stood spellbound. All along the trench line as far as he could see came wave upon wave of attackers, before him and to his left were the Americans, while to his right surged the lines of Brit-

ish Tommies, Canadians, and Australians, and far, far beyond to the extreme left of the Yankee line Danny knew that the French Poilus were bobbing from their trenches, fired with a desire to push the great Boche line back, back, back.

Everything seemed to break loose at that moment. The artillery bombardment from the American side, though it had been going at full blast for days, seemed to increase in its intensity. The German guns to his rear took up the deadly chorus in a frightened hysterical way, while the rattle of rifle fire and the ripping, tearing sound of the machine guns was almost appalling. And added to it all, was the thunder of the guns of a half dozen of the most grotesque-looking land craft Danny had ever seen. They were to Danny's right, and they were working in co-operation with the charging line of Tommies. They were the famous British tanks, and as they lumbered across the broken shell-swept field, they looked like nothing more than huge steel-skinned, mastodons, belching fire and death as they rumbled forward. They seemed to Danny to be irresistible, and the young American could understand why the monsters inspired such awe and fear in the Huns.

But better than the tanks as supporters, the Americans had a perfect cloud of aeroplanes. With the beginning of the charge they went up

from far in the rear of the American lines like a huge flock of war birds. Then flying so close together that they almost darkened the sky, they swept forward, a veritable troop of cavalry on wings.

In a flash they were hovering over the charging line of Americans, and an instant later they were preceding it, scattering through the air and flying low over Danny's head toward the German trenches. And each one of them spat fire and death from a deadly machine gun that it carried. Low they flew, the drumming of their motors making a terrible din as they flashed by. Then they opened upon the German trenches and Danny could only guess the destruction they caused in the Teuton lines.

And in the height of it all Danny heard a terrific rumbling roar. The ground rocked as if a tremendous earthquake had occurred, and huge volumes of earth were hurled skyward, where the German first line trenches were. Mines, that the American engineers had been secretly digging for weeks past had been exploded under the German position, at the beginning of the attack.

On came the mass of Americans charging and yelling and stumbling forward, covering the uneven ground in scattered ranks, and slowly, but ever moving forward, irresistible in their determination.

Soon they were but twenty yards from the shell hole in which Danny crouched. Unable to restrain himself any longer, Danny leapt to his feet, and yelled with all his might:

"Come on, come on," he cried, exactly as if he were cheering a high-school relay team to victory at home.

And the Americans did come on. Presently the sweating, panting, shouting men were breaking about the shell crater like surf against the rocks. The mass of men swirled by. Danny saw several fall, one on the very lips of the shell crater. It was the chance he wanted. Up over the top of the hole he dashed, and seizing the rifle from the clutches of the wounded man, and unsnapping his cartridge belt, he appropriated them as his own. Then after hastily dragging the injured one into the security of the shell hole, he dashed out again, and presently he was behind the ever-advancing line of Americans.

But he did not want to be behind. He wanted to be in front. On he dashed, and in a moment he was elbowing his way between two big fighters, and what was his surprise to discover that the one on his right was none other than Big Bill Bailey.

Even in the frenzy of battle Bailey took time enough to yell a greeting. When he saw Danny first, he looked startled and surprised, then

though he did not realize where his younger chum had come from, he grinned and yelled:

"Yah, Danny, great stuff, we're goin' t' give 'em all that's comin' to 'em this time, t' dirty Huns, come on."

Danny stuck close to Big Bill, and on they dashed. They reached the all but obliterated wire entanglements of the Germans, and the yawning craters where the mines had exploded. The first line of trenches was nothing but battered uneven gullies filled with dead and wounded. Over these they leapt onward.

Soon they surged against the second line. Here were a few men fighting, but most of them were running to the rear. Bailey clashed with one. That German never had a chance, as Bailey downed him with the first thrust. Others were quickly accounted for and without halting in their pace the Yankees swept the second defence clear and plunged on toward the third, two hundred yards away.

Here the Boches were massed for the defences. Here were gathered all that were left of the first and second line defenders with the men who held the third line trenches, and while they were massing, the American artillery was riddling them with shell fire and throwing a curtain of explosives in their rear through which no reinforcements could hope to pass.

These third line trenches were almost on the edge of the town of B—— and at one point they curved off into one of the village streets.

Even in the brief space before the Americans had covered the two hundred yards and closed in, Danny had had time to glance ahead at the town a quarter of a mile away. It was a veritable inferno. Shells rained down on it, and masonry, wood and brick flew in all directions. It was all but leveled in scarcely the time it takes to tell of the event, and Danny knew that the German units quartered there were having a hard time of it.

At the third line trenches the Boches really made the stand of the entire engagement. Machine guns hastily mounted along the parapet spat a deadly fire at the charging Americans. And huddled in the trenches, firing frantically, were hundreds of Huns, their back virtually to the wall and making their last desperate struggle.

On came the Americans, but before they had covered scarcely half the distance between the second and third line trenches, five aeroplanes, like giant hawks, swept down from overhead, and scarcely fifty feet above the ground led the charge on the trenches, pouring deadly fire into the mass of Huns. This helped the troops a great deal, for the Boches tried desperately to beat off these deadly bird-machines, and while they were thus

engaged, the Americans closed in with a clash of steel and a ringing cry of triumph.

What a fight that was. Down into the ditch leapt the men in khaki, struggling, slashing, shooting and yelling. It was a veritable maelstrom of grappling men. Danny, standing on the parapet for a moment, saw one American pounce down upon a Boche, who tried to stab him with his bayonet. The American came in so close that bayonet and rifle were useless. He threw them away, locked his one arm about the Boche, and with his free hand beat the man unconscious. Then with a mighty heave he threw the limp form clear over the parados, grabbed up his rifle and started up the trench looking for more victims.

Bailey was in it shoulder deep, for this was the sort of fighting he liked best. He was a demon roaring up and down the trench. A Boche rushed at him with bayonet lowered. As cool as could be Bailey parried the thrust, then as the German stepped in, he crashed the butt of his rifle into the Hun's face and knocked him unconscious. Another man, an officer, aimed at Bailey with his pistol. Bailey leapt at him, seized the hand with the automatic in it and with a mighty twist broke the officer's arm. With a cry of anguish the German fell and Bailey viciously kicked him out of the way.

Still the maddened mob of men fought and swayed and struggled and cried out there in the narrow trench. Dead and wounded were many; Danny found himself tramping over them wherever he stepped. There were men running, men shouting, men shooting. Every one was in a frenzy. Danny saw a Boche, slinking away from the battle. He charged him. The Boche turned to defend himself, and dropped dead at Danny's feet, before the American had struck a blow. A bullet had found him, and Danny's efforts were useless.

More men were running. The Americans were too numerous and too active for the Germans, and each time a man found a chance to slip away from the turmoil, he did. Danny saw another one trying to get away. He closed in again. The German saw him coming, and throwing up his hand fell to his knees crying *"Kamerad."* Danny looked at him in disgust, pointed toward the American lines, and hurried on.

Presently he came up with Big Bill again, who was breathing hard and glaring about him for more enemies. "They're running, Bill, we've got 'em going. Come on," cried Danny. And Bailey with a yell of triumph joined him in pursuit of the retreating Germans. Other Americans entered the chase too, and soon the entire attacking party was pursuing the running Huns, driv-

ing them into the shell riddled town of B—— and leaving behind them piles upon piles of the enemy dead and wounded, and scores of prisoners, who were being conducted to the rear under guard.

It was a pell-mell run for the town now, the Americans driving the Germans before them like so much cattle. Many of the Boches, scattered in every direction taking refuge where they could. The shell-torn streets became the battle ground now. Here and there Germans had hastily erected barricades of everything and anything. Danny saw a group of Boches hidden behind an old bed in the middle of a shell-swept street. He charged them with Bailey and some others at his heels, firing as they ran.

The Huns left their barrier and took to other cover. On down the street raced the Yankees. Now they stopped to hurl a hand grenade into an open cellar hole, again they paused to dislodge a German sniper who had taken refuge in a place of vantage. Soon they encountered a wider street, the boulevard of the town. Into this they turned, only to stagger back and take refuge for a moment behind a masonry wall. The Huns had mounted a machine gun not twenty yards away.

A hasty conference was held. There was a score of them behind the wall.

"Rush 'em with hand grenades," shouted Big Bill.

Every man drew upon his supply of grenades, and Bill handed Danny one. Then with a mad yell they charged again, and a shower of deadly bombs blew the machine gun and its crew to atoms, and opened a hole in the boulevard pavement at the point where the Germans had been. On they rushed again, clearing the streets of stragglers. Danny heard firing coming from the windows of a ruined building to his left. There were Huns in there. He felt a sharp pain in his side, but he forgot it immediately.

"In here," he yelled, and he bolted through the battered door of the building and started to climb the rickety stairs. Others followed him to be met at the top by four Germans. The Yankees charged them and a moment later four dead bodies fell from the window into the street while the Americans presently emerged from the doorway and continued with their work of clearing the town.

More cellars were bombed and more stragglers were caught and made prisoners as on plunged the Americans.

Soon they came to the far end of the town. Here near the cemetery they encountered a mass of Germans frantically digging themselves in. The Huns intended to make another stand. The

Yankees refused to let them. In spite of the smallness of the party they charged, and outnumbered two to one they clashed with the Huns again, in a hand-to-hand battle. Big Bill and Danny were in the thick of it with a score or more of men in khaki beside them, fighting as only Americans can fight.

The fury of the attack and the vengeance with which the Yankees fought, forced the Germans out of their shallow trench, and more Americans, coming down the street on a run, threw their weight in with the attackers, and literally swept the Huns before them. They separated in little groups of fighters. Here were three Americans struggling against six burly Boches, at another point where a half dozen men in khaki, slashing and firing into a knot of struggling Huns. Danny and Big Bill, and two others, had five men cornered against the shattered wall of a building. They called upon them to surrender, but for answer the Germans charged and tried to break through that line of unwavering bayonets. Steel met steel and the sparks flew, and shots rang out. Danny saw one German fire point blank at Big Bill. The stalwart American, with the roar of a bull, sprang at him, stumbled, and fell and rolled over, and Danny could see a powder-burned hole in the breast of his khaki tunic where the Hun's rifle had flashed.

Beside himself with rage Danny rushed at the big German and before he had time to turn he lunged forward, and felt his bayonet drive home.

Then in a perfect frenzy he slashed this way and that. Wherever he saw an ugly, leering face he struck out either with his bayonet or with the butt of his gun. The Germans went down before his furious charges, and the rushes of his two companions, and inside of a minute all that was left of the five men were the five stark muddy gray mounds lying on the ground.

Danny felt weak and tired after that. His head whirled, and his shoulder and side hurt him. He knew he had been wounded twice. Blood had soaked his undergarments. It was cold and chilly on his flesh. He was dizzy, too, and he seemed to be walking about in a daze.

With an effort he threw this feeling off, and bent over the form of Big Bill, who writhed about on the ground with the pain of his wound.

Danny held him still for a moment, and saw that the hole in his right breast was big and gaping and that the blood was flowing freely. He made the big fighter as comfortable as possible, by propping him against the wall. Then he pulled out his first aid kit and stuffed gauze and cotton in the wound. He did it all in a daze, mechanically. His senses seemed to have been

dulled. He spoke a sentence or two to Bailey. What they were he never remembered. Then with the one vague idea in his head that he must find a man from the medical corps to take care of his friend, he stumbled away.

The fighting was still going on in places. He passed the shallow trench which they had so recently attacked. It was filled with Americans now who were wielding the entrenching tools. They were digging themselves in. An officer called to him. Danny shook his head and wandered on dragging his rifle after him. He was dazed and all but unconscious. He was tired, too. He wanted to lie down and rest and sleep. Shells fell all about. He saw them flash. He felt their concussion. He heard their splinters whistle and shriek past his head. But they made not the slightest impression upon his tired brain.

He stumbled onward. It made no difference to him that all the Americans were taking to cover and that trenches were being dug and tenanted as fast as the Yankees could work. He did not know, nor did he care that the German batteries had opened up a tremendous bombardment on the town they had so recently held, in a mad effort to drive out the Americans. He cared for nothing, saw nothing that made an impression upon him and knew nothing, save that one thing, that he must find some one to help Big Bill.

On he wandered all alone out there in shell-swept streets. Americans hiding here and there behind stone walls and in the ruins of dilapidated buildings called to him frantically to hurry to shelter. He shook his head and scuffled along the street still dragging his rifle with him.

Then suddenly from somewhere, some one rushed out into the street and seized him. He struggled hard at first, then very feebly as his fast-ebbing strength left him. He felt himself being dragged somewhere. He knew that he was among Americans for he heard words he recognized. He said something himself. He did not know what it was, but what he wanted to tell them was that they should go out and get Bill, Big Bill, his last friend, the last man of the old squad. There was still a chance to save him. He was wounded and bleeding, over there by the cemetery. He—he—(it was an effort to talk but still he tried) some one must—must—find Bill—Bill—finest fighter—bravest man——

Danny felt some one cut the sleeve of his coat. He felt a hot sharp pain in his arm as some one forced a needle into the flesh. Then a delicious sense of rest stole over him. He closed his bleared eyes. He was unconscious.

CHAPTER XX.

CORPORAL KELLY.

It was the feeling of snow white, billowy sheets that first aroused Danny to full consciousness of where he was. He could not believe his somewhat dulled and hazy senses. White sheets! It was far, far off in the dim and misty past; ages ago since he had been between white sheets. Indeed, he hardly believed that such things existed.

He tried to look around. There was some one standing by his bedside. No, there were two. A nurse and an officer. They were talking. Danny tried to turn a little in his bed so he could see them. But he could not move easily for one arm was pinned down to his side and he was wrapped in bandages like a mummy. Indeed, he was clothed in tightly-bound gauze from his shoulders to his hips. He wondered why.

His efforts to move caused the nurse and the officer to turn toward him, and Danny beheld with great surprise that the officer was none other than Captain Ragan. Danny tried me-

chanically to salute, but he did not have the strength to raise his hand.

The officer and nurse smiled.

"Well, Kelly, you've come through at last," said the Captain with a fatherly smile.

"I think so," said Danny weakly. Then certain recollections flooding back to his memory brought a hundred questions to his lips, all of which he wanted to ask. But the nurse stopped him.

"No, no, not now. You can't talk for a long time yet. You're not out of danger, you know."

"That's right, Kelly, don't try to rush things," said the Captain. "You've been here for a month between life and death with two wounds and a terrible case of fever."

Danny looked surprised.

"A month!"

"Yes; a month. Our company has been in and out of the first line trenches three times since we captured B——."

"We won it, then! Good!" said Danny.

"Why bless you, yes. Our first line trenches are five miles beyond that point now. The company is in rest billet at present in St. V——. I came over to see you and Bailey, and a couple of others fellows who got it mighty bad."

"Bailey? He's alive?" asked Danny.

"Indeed he is. He's a corporal, too—— Well

bless my soul I forgot to tell you you're a corporal. I have the warrant for both of you among my papers. You're Corporal Kelly sure enough and—and—I'm not making any promises, but by the time you and Bailey get back to the company again I wouldn't be surprised but what we might find use for both of you as Sergeants. The company has changed a lot since we captured B——, let me tell you."

"I know," sighed Danny, "the Wurra-wurra Squad is all gone except for Bailey and me."

"Yes, and that's not the only squad that was nearly wiped out," smiled the Captain sadly.

Then, with a fatherly pat on his head, the Captain turned to go, and Danny, quite tired out but happy, thought of the time when he should be well enough to get into khaki again and then closed his eyes and slept.